

Fictions of Anti-Conquest:
Origins and Ambivalence in some Recent Pakeha Historical Novels

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Acknowledgement

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Abstract

In this thesis I examine how some recent Pakeha writers have dealt with the difficulties of a colonial past in their fictional histories. I look at C. K. Stead's *The Singing Whakapapa* (1994), Ian Wedde's *Symmes Hole* (1986) and Maurice Shadbolt's New Zealand Wars trilogy: *Season of the Jew* (1986), *Monday's Warriors* (1990) and *The House of Strife* (1993). I focus on the techniques employed by these writers to construct a secure and guiltless sense of belonging for a late-twentieth-century Pakeha readership. This involves a look at how they approach issues of cultural authenticity and tradition and how they negotiate the difficulties, identified by Homi K. Bhabha, at the colonial moment. I argue that ambivalences similar to those identified by Bhabha re-emerge in these contemporary narratives. However, in their attempts to authorise a continued Pakeha presence, the novels respond to a new context. Increased Maori assertiveness and a growing awareness of colonial injustices left many Pakeha, in the 1980s and 1990s, with feelings of anxiety about the past; something apparent, for example, in Michael King's "ethnic autobiographies". Bhabha's theories, in order that they remain applicable within this new context, require modification and must be combined with other theoretical approaches. These are provided by Stephen Turner, Jonathan Lamb and Mary-Louise Pratt. With reference to these theorists I argue that, in the novels of Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt, new ambivalences arise out of the contradictory demands of a contemporary Pakeha readership. Other difficulties are inherited from the narrative of "anti-conquest", a term borrowed from Pratt to describe how, in order to circumvent guilt, colonial domination is rewritten in passive forms. Irony, a complicating factor in each of these novels, is used to obscure uncertainty and to protect the narratives – and the politics behind them – from criticism.

Introduction

It seems inevitable that any discussion of settler identity involves a consideration of “colonial unease”. In regard to early colonial literature, such unease is usually theorised as a difficulty in negotiating a relationship with the parent culture. It involves a feeling of alienation from that culture, something that in the New Zealand context is heightened by a geographical isolation, a sense of living at the edge of the world. If this suggests a mentality which still looks to Europe as “home” it is nevertheless combined with a feeling that the imported culture – on which the settler relies for authority – is at variance with local conditions.

The cultural nationalist impulse of the 1930s can be understood as a response to such difficulties; it constitutes an attempt to discover a sense of belonging through an adherence to New Zealand realities and truth to the New Zealand experience. In terms borrowed from Allen Curnow – whose criticism defines the cultural nationalist position¹ – it is about focusing on the “actual” rather than the “pretended” (*Book* 20); in effect, putting aside a conception of New Zealand formed through a self-conscious awareness of its relationship with Britain. The result, however, is an emphasis on a sense of alienation within the new landscape, something Curnow describes as “[t]he idea that we are confronted by a natural time, a natural order, to which our presence in these islands is accidental, irrelevant; that we are interlopers on an indifferent or hostile scene” (*Book* 45). Paradoxically, this preoccupation with the loneliness and inhospitability of the land sees the cultural nationalist achieve a sort of homecoming by announcing that he/she is *not* at home. In this sense, any attempt by the cultural nationalist to forge an identity in the new land becomes

¹ See Curnow’s Introductions to *A Book of New Zealand Verse 1923-50* (1951) and *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* (1960).

problematic². It could be argued that the source of the difficulty lies in a refusal to acknowledge the presence of an indigenous population. The emphasis on an empty and inhospitable landscape may be a source of anxiety but it does, at least, allow the settler to ignore issues of colonial dispossession. This suggests that any homecoming achieved by the cultural nationalist is due more to a convenient “forgetting” of the native than to any real observation of reality.

A similar sort of “forgetting” of the indigenous culture is apparent in an attitude recalled by Michael King: “Growing up in the New Zealand of the 1940s and 1950s I would not have called myself Pakeha. Nor would I have considered that I belonged to what would later be called a ‘majority culture’” (*Being Pakeha Now* 13). Instead, King saw himself as an “Irish New Zealander, a Catholic” (13). In constructing an identity in this way, King – and no doubt many others like him – were able to ignore their relationship with an “invisible” Maori culture. Indeed, for many Pakeha, the secret of New Zealand’s enviable record of “race relations” was simply a matter of not noticing difference. We were all New Zealanders. During the late 1970s and 1980s, however, increased Maori protest highlighted a need to re-evaluate this position: “Maori have demanded recognition of their special status as tangata whenua, people of the land; of the need to acknowledge cultural difference in all areas of life” (Barrowman xviii-xix). This was reflected in political change that saw the powers of the Waitangi Tribunal extended to allow for the investigation of claims going back to 1840. Settler identity became more complicated and more anxious as some Pakeha, in response to indigenous claims and to the Maori cultural renaissance, began to question their right to belong in New Zealand. Suddenly, what it meant to be Pakeha required explanation. More importantly, it required an explanation that would take the issue of indigeneity into account.

² Curnow, it seems, did not see the difficulty. A sense of unease at least made for good poetry: “We are fortunate that some not insubstantial poems have sprung from those very anxieties about our footing upon our own soil, our standing in the world, which must continue to inhibit us as a people” (*Book* 48)

King, in his “ethnic autobiographies” *Being Pakeha* and *Being Pakeha Now*, looks to the past – to family history in particular – to resolve issues of identity within the present. As he puts it, “an understanding of our respective origins is the beginning of an understanding of our present selves” (*Being Pakeha Now* 11). C. K. Stead fictionalises a very similar approach to identity in his novel, *The Singing Whakapapa* (1994). Hugh Grady, the central character, lives in 1990s Auckland and spends much of his time researching family history. Of particular interest to him is his great-great-grandfather John Flatt, a lay catechist who arrived in New Zealand in 1835. Events of the past are paralleled with the events of Hugh’s life and he is left, at the end of the novel, with an enhanced understanding of his place within the present. In Ian Wedde’s novel *Symmes Hole* (1986) the intermingling of past and present is more explicit. A nameless researcher living in 1980s Wellington does not so much study the past as attempt to relive it; he wants to “get back” to John “Worser” Heberley, a whaler who arrived in New Zealand in 1829. The researcher’s approach to the past is dominated, not by a desire to reframe “official” history but to enter a “failed” history initiated by Heberley. While these novels take differing approaches to the past, they both react to a late-twentieth-century cultural climate. The same is true of Maurice Shadbolt’s New Zealand Wars trilogy: *Season of the Jew* (1986), *Monday’s Warriors* (1990) and *The House of Strife* (1993). Although Shadbolt’s trilogy does not include characters from the late twentieth century, he revises history in order that it meets the requirements of a contemporary readership.

The novels I have chosen to examine, all published within eight years, represent a range of late-twentieth-century Pakeha responses to history and identity. Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt each react in different ways to a 1980s context that sees increased Maori assertiveness and attempts, on the part of successive governments, to address Maori grievances. Their reactions involve, to varying degrees, a defence of the Pakeha presence as it stands or a rewriting of

what it means to be Pakeha in the wake of guilt and anxiety about the past. A redefinition of left-wing politics sees Stead – who adopts the former position – left representing a conservative and often reactionary response. As a former English professor, he remains attuned to academic debate but seeks a wider audience for his “common sense” approach to cultural politics as a columnist for Auckland’s *Metro* magazine. Shadbolt, a prolific writer and key figure in New Zealand literature responds to an even broader audience. Essentially a “middle-brow” writer, his novels are realist, easily read and plot-driven. *The Times Literary Supplement*, quoted on the inside flap of *From the Edge of the Sky*, describes Shadbolt as an author “spurned by the academy but warmly embraced by ordinary people”. Whether this is true or not, his novels represent a key response to the cultural concerns of the late twentieth century. Wedde – a poet, critic, novelist and latterly, curator at Te Papa – rewrites Pakeha identity in terms that reflect the concerns of a redefined left-wing section of Pakeha society. *Symmes Hole* is a difficult novel that does not appeal to the popular market.

In writing about the colonial past Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt are forced to deal with some difficult issues. For those Pakeha willing to think about it at all, history became, in the 1980s and 1990s, a source of anxiety. It had become increasingly difficult to believe the myth that New Zealand’s “race relations” were the envy of the world and that colonisation, in delivering technology and “civilisation”, had been beneficial to Maori. The final decades of the twentieth century brought a new perception of what colonialism involved: the introduction of diseases that ravaged the indigenous population; the alienation of Maori from their land by violent or fraudulent means; the disruption of indigenous economies, religions, social and political structures; the suppression of Maori language and the imposition of an imported culture. It seemed, suddenly, that colonisation had little to do with progress. Combined with a romanticised notion of Maori culture, an emphasis on the “fatal-impact” of European contact ensured Pakeha feelings of guilt. Adding to this was an increased awareness of

on-going difficulties: a knowledge that the Treaty of Waitangi had not been honoured, that Pakeha institutions were failing Maori, and that racism had a continued presence in New Zealand society. Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt all respond, in very different ways, to this change in climate. They acknowledge, within their novels, the wrongs of colonial intervention. At the same time, however, they attempt to provide Pakeha with a “way out” of such difficulties. These are novels that attempt to authorise, for Pakeha, a guiltless sense of belonging within the present.

Given this imperative, colonial history provides further difficulties. In looking back at the colonial moment, these writers are forced to negotiate what is, according to Homi K. Bhabha, a site of profound ambivalence. Bhabha’s concern is with the articulation of colonial authority at, or close to, the point of contact and because his theories provide the basis of my understanding of what Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt are dealing with, they require further explanation. Bhabha uses early-nineteenth-century letters, missionary records and histories relating to the colonisation of India to examine the assumptions on which colonial discourse relies for its authority. As he summarises it, colonialist authority “demand[s] that the space it occupies be unbounded, its reality *coincident* with the emergence of an imperialist narrative and history, its discourse *non-dialogic*, its enunciation *unitary*, unmarked by the trace of difference” (115). He argues this with reference to the experience of an Indian catechist and a group of Christian converts outside Delhi in 1817. For Bhabha, the English book – in this instance, the Bible – functions as an emblem of colonial authority: it is “the word of God, truth [and] art” (105). It represents the univocal nature of English authority within the colonial context. To state it more broadly, colonial discourse disavows the existence of cultural or historical difference and denies the chaos of its intervention.

However, Bhabha’s theory of cultural hybridity sees this assumed

universality of colonial discourse undermined: “Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other ‘denied’ knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority” (Bhabha 114). Native knowledges enter the coloniser’s discourse and cause it to become uncertain. The converts outside Delhi, for example, refuse both Baptism and the Sacrament; the latter on the basis of a Hindu tradition of vegetarianism. What they do, then, is interpret the Bible according to their own pre-existing beliefs. As they assert cultural difference the Bible loses its claim to universality and colonial authority is turned back on itself. As Robert Young puts it, “[s]uddenly it is the white English culture that betrays itself, and the English missionary who is turned into a cannibalistic vampire” (*Colonial Desire* 162). Here, at the point of enunciation, the discourse of the coloniser becomes hybridised, its authority ambivalent. Although the English book “retains its presence... it is no longer a representation of an essence; it is now a partial presence, a (strategic) device in a specific colonial engagement” (Bhabha 114-15).

Stephen Turner’s analysis of an incident between Captain Cook and Maori in Poverty Bay, 1769, suggests that Bhabha’s assessment of the colonial moment is applicable within a New Zealand context. Although Turner is not writing in response to Bhabha, he begins by identifying an element of ambivalence within Cook’s journal. This occurs as Cook attempts to justify the fact that seven Maori have been fired upon from the *Endeavour*, and four of them killed. The extract from the journal, as quoted by Turner in “A History Lesson”, begins in this way: “I am aware that most humane men who have not experienced things of this nature will censure my conduct in firing upon the people in this boat nor do I my self think that the reason I had for seizing upon her will att all justify me, and had I thought that they would have made the least resistance I would not have come near them” (Cook qtd. in Turner 89). Turner argues that this response is the result of an inability to conceive of cultural

difference. Cook is confused by the behaviour of Maori because he cannot comprehend that they behave in a completely different, but internally consistent, manner. In accounting for this Turner, in effect, rephrases Bhabha's argument about the coloniser's assumption of universality: "difference was not conceived in what we would today consider 'cultural' terms; rather, it was thought that [those living in the state of nature] represented human society at an earlier stage in the development of civilization as a whole" ("History Lesson" 90). Cook, reliant on a set of beliefs that Turner attributes to John Locke, cannot conceive of the fact that Maori do not act according to similar beliefs. This sort of analysis sees Turner, like Bhabha, investigate the operation of colonial discourse at, or close to, the moment of encounter. Turner, however, takes his analysis further by identifying a link between such moments and current issues of identity. He treats Cook's encounter with Maori as an emblematic moment, one that represents a mode of thinking that has an impact even today. He argues that an inability to recognise the fact of cultural difference at the colonial moment has meant that New Zealand society has been improperly constituted. This, and a Pakeha reliance on modes of thought that confer rights in terms of property rather than belonging, lies at the heart of difficulties with settler identity: "Without acknowledging an originary cultural difference, the radical individualism of whites cannot explain their position in the society they have settled" ("History Lesson" 97).

If this is so, it makes the tasks of Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt even more complex. They are forced, not only to negotiate the difficulties of the colonial moment, but to do so within a context that keeps such difficulties alive. Add to this the demands of a sensitive Pakeha readership keen to establish a sense of belonging and the task becomes even more difficult. It involves dealing with past and present ambivalences; some inherited and others arising out of contemporary demands. Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt all attempt, in very different ways and with varying degrees of success, to meet these demands. Bhabha's theories –

particularly those relating to a disavowal of cultural and historical difference – provide a starting point for an analysis of the novels as late-twentieth-century attempts to authorise the Pakeha presence. However, given that the colonising culture is now the majority culture, the dynamics of cultural interaction are very different from what they were at the colonial moment. Bhabha's theories, in order that they remain applicable in the contemporary context, require modification and must be combined with other theoretical approaches. These are provided by Turner, Jonathan Lamb and Mary-Louise Pratt.

I begin by looking at issues of indigeneity and cultural authenticity and how these were dealt with during the 1980s and early 1990s. My analysis is dependent on that of Lamb who, in "Problems of Originality: or, Beware of Pakeha Baring Guilt", argues that contemporary Pakeha approaches to colonial "origins" are reliant on a binary distinction between Pakeha guilt and Maori innocence. The difficulty, according to Lamb, is that such thinking leads to an assumption that authenticity can be gained from the past. This, in turn, sees Pakeha attempting to rewrite themselves into an appropriated indigeneity. A similar sort of binary thinking translates into what Mark Williams describes as two opposing views of tradition: one that emphasises a European heritage and another that focuses on a new Pacific identity. In what follows, by means of a close reading of Wedde's *Symmes Hole* and Stead's *The Singing Whakapapa*, I investigate these two very different approaches to tradition. My focus is on how these writers negotiate the colonial moment and how, given their views of tradition, they approach issues of Pakeha identity and cultural authenticity within the present.

Turner argues, in "Settlement as Forgetting", that "New Zealanders today have a weak sense of history" (21) and that contemporary settler culture is constructed "ahistorically" (21). This provides a starting point for my discussion of Shadbolt. In writing about the colonial past at all, Shadbolt – like Stead and

Wedde – works against a tide of historical “forgetfulness”. Blaming this on a Eurocentric approach to history at the time he was growing up, Shadbolt sets out to take possession of New Zealand’s history and to provide his readership with a heroic past. In doing so, he demonstrates how history can be constructed within a culture that is fearful of its colonial origins. My second chapter, then, focuses on how each of the writers tailor their fictional histories to meet the demands of a contemporary Pakeha readership. Pratt’s analysis of what she calls the “narrative of anti-conquest” provides the basis of my discussion. Analysing eighteenth and nineteenth-century travel writing, Pratt identifies how active forms of colonial domination can be rewritten as passive, thus allowing the coloniser to justify his/her presence and pre-empt feelings of guilt. Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt each adopt elements of “anti-conquest” in their novels, but in order that their narratives work successfully within a contemporary context these elements are combined with other approaches. One involves the distancing of the protagonist from an “official” history of colonisation. Others deal more directly with the problem of cultural difference, something I discuss in more detail with regard to Shadbolt.

The first two chapters are based on “non-suspicious” readings of the novels. They focus not on issues of irony or authorial distance, but on how the characters function. I treat Hugh in *The Singing Whakapapa* and the researcher in *Symmes Hole* as representatives of particular Pakeha responses to history and identity in the late twentieth century. As focal characters within third person narratives they provide a limited, although consistent, point-of-view. It is through the consciousness of these fictional characters that the past is assimilated into a contemporary context and passed on to the reader. George Fairweather in *Season of the Jew* and Kimball Bent in *Monday’s Warriors* – although situated in the past – operate in a similar way by mediating between a difficult colonial history and the present-day reader. Ferdinand Wildblood does this more directly in *The House of Strife* by providing a first person point-of-view.

In the final chapter I look at the issue of ambivalence and how it affects the fictional histories that these writers construct. This involves a broader look at each novel and how it functions within contemporary debates, particularly those debates in which the authors are involved. The interplay of past and present ambivalence must also be addressed. As indicated earlier, ambivalence – in the form that Bhabha describes – can be inherited from the colonial moment. It re-emerges today in uncertainties about belonging and can be understood as the result of fresh attempts, within the present, to ignore cultural or historical difference. Equally, however, ambivalence can arise from the contradictory demands of a contemporary readership: the need, for instance, for history to provide a sense of belonging while acknowledging colonial wrongs. Irony can function here as a protective device. It obscures the distance between author and character, something that allows the author to step back from his own attempts to “tame” history. Responsibility can be placed instead on a focal character. That this occurs, however, is another indication of uncertainty, another instance which sees a Pakeha attempt to attain a sense of belonging unsettled by ambivalence.

Chapter 1: Origins

The Race for Origin

“Who Came First?” is the headline of an article by Denis Welch in the Listener of 8 April 2000. The article explores a claim that a “megalithic Celtic people ... occupied this country thousands of years before the Maori” (26). They were, according to proponents of the theory, “an enlightened and peaceable people who built cities and temples and tended the land before being wiped out by the incoming Maori” (26). Welch describes his visit to a site near the Maunganui Bluff where Martin Doutré, author of *Ancient Celtic New Zealand*, identifies the ruins of an antipodean Stonehenge. Welch is skeptical. If the stones strewn across the hillside form a pattern it is not readily distinguishable. Furthermore, the academic community, according to Welch, “regards Doutré as a couple of sandwiches short of a picnic” (27). My interest, however, is not in whether such claims are true but in the context of the debate.³ Doutré’s claims can be understood as the literal counterpart to a broader debate about cultural origins in the final decades of the twentieth century. His mapping of stones near Maunganui Bluff reflects a need among some Pakeha to validate their presence in this country by redefining the past. That Doutré’s thesis undermines the status of Maori as tangata whenua and turns the relationship between colonised and coloniser on its head is also significant. It illustrates how a Pakeha attempt to gain authenticity from the past can quickly degenerate into a competition with Maori for the most desirable origin. My interest, then, is not in “who came first” but in how Pakeha, at the end of the twentieth century, negotiated issues of identity and belonging. This involves an exploration of how – in light of Homi K. Bhabha’s theories of cultural hybridity – the colonial moment is negotiated. It also requires an examination of Pakeha attitudes

³ It was also the subject of a television documentary “Who Was Here Before Us?” that screened on Television New Zealand, 11 September 2000.

towards cultural authenticity or “originality”.

Jonathan Lamb, in “Problems of Originality: or, Beware of Pakeha Baring Guilt”, provides a framework within which the issue of colonial origins can be understood. With reference to contemporary Pakeha attempts to attain a sense of belonging, he emphasises the problematic nature of colonial origins when viewed retrospectively. Lamb’s analysis rests on the ambiguous meaning of the word “original”, the difficulties of which are compounded within the colonial context:

[T]he word *original* is troublesome in a New Zealand context; or, indeed, in any context where colonisation has made the dating of cultural and historical starting points problematical. It conjures up two disturbing and contradictory scenarios: that of an origin slipping away into the patterns of an imperial (and therefore alien) history; and that of an origin suddenly announced and violently appropriated at the expense of indigenous continuities.
(“Problems” 352)

This suggests that the problems identified by Bhabha at the colonial moment become, in the context of the 1980s when Lamb is writing, problems of history. However, the effect on colonial authority is comparable. The uncertainties that undermine the coloniser’s authority at the point of contact are transformed into feelings of guilt that unsettle attempts to authorise a continued Pakeha presence at the end of the twentieth century. Feelings of unreality and dislocation – identified by Lamb as key features of New Zealand literature since the 1930s – indicate other problems with a colonial legacy: “The tyranny of an origin at once spurious, obscure, guilt-ridden and unjust is manifested variously among Pakeha writers and critics as problems of self, of morality, of belonging, of history, and of language” (“Problems” 353). Colonial anxieties are transferred onto a landscape described as lonely and silent. If such a landscape begins to feel like “home” it

provides only an anxious homecoming, one that internalises colonial uncertainty and shuts out the indigenous presence. The silent landscape within New Zealand literature, then, is analogous to that described by Bhabha which “turns imperial triumphalism into the testimony of colonial confusion” (123). It points to a foundering of the colonising discourse within the colonial context. Certainly, for Lamb, the “muteness of the land or the deafness of its invaders” is indicative of a problem at the colonial origin: “Nothing truly belongs so everyone and everything shuts up” (“Problems” 354).

Given the difficulties that Bhabha identifies at the colonial moment and given that these appear to be compounded when colonial beginnings are viewed retrospectively, how do Ian Wedde and C. K. Stead, two of the leading novelists of the 1980s and 1990s, negotiate the colonial past? The researcher in Wedde’s *Symmes Hole* and Hugh, the main character in Stead’s *The Singing Whakapapa* represent very different approaches both to the nature of colonial origins and to the impact that these have on the present. However, the importance of these novels lies not in what they tell us about the colonial moment, but in what they say about current approaches to Pakeha identity. To put it another way, the colonial moment is not there to be discovered, rather, it is something we apply meaning to in accordance with the demands of the present. A similar point is made by Nicholas Thomas in his introduction to *Cook’s Sites: Revisiting History*, a study of foundational moments in New Zealand’s colonial history: “No image is an innocent transcript of nature, and no account of the past can be a simple reconstruction that lacks a grounding in the present. One’s stance may be acknowledged or covert, explicit or implicit, but either way it shapes the images and narratives one produces” (8). Thomas’s analysis suggests that, over time, the colonial moment is overlaid with a multitude of meanings, all of which reflect the preoccupations that govern the context in which they arise. Stead and Wedde, writing in the final decades of the twentieth century and placing their central investigating characters within the same context, ensure that their novels

communicate contemporary concerns.

Michael King's "ethnic autobiographies", *Being Pakeha: An Encounter with New Zealand and the Maori Renaissance* and *Being Pakeha Now: Reflections and Recollections of a White Native*, provide a window on Pakeha concerns of the late twentieth century and a context for *Symmes Hole* and *The Singing Whakapapa*. The very existence of King's books, (and his collection of essays by notable Pakeha, *Pakeha: The Quest for Identity in New Zealand*) indicate an increased concern with Pakeha self-definition. *Being Pakeha* became, during the 1980s, something that required explanation. Like the myth of New Zealand's exemplary "race relations", it could no longer be taken for granted. Such changes in thinking can be explained, in part, by increased Maori activism. A powerful Maori land rights movement had grown out of the 1970s and crystallised in high-profile protests at Bastion Point, Raglan and Waitangi. These, and an increased emphasis on the value of Maori culture and language, saw the 1984 government respond with an official policy of biculturalism and an extension of the powers of the Waitangi Tribunal. As King explains, "some Pakeha who watched the waxing of the Maori cultural renaissance began to question the basis for their own presence in the country. If Maori were tangata whenua, indigenous people with whom the agencies of the Crown had an obligation to consult, who or what were Pakeha?" (*Being Pakeha Now* 234). King's books, then, are about "issues of ethnicity and identity, of belonging and not belonging" (*Being Pakeha Now* 9). Lamb is more forthright when, in 1987, he describes the effects of Maori protest movements on the Pakeha consciousness: "liberal white (or Pakeha) sympathy for Maori grievances has been transformed: passive goodwill has given way to tumultuous feelings of guilt, responsibility, admiration, even yearning for the indigenous culture so nearly destroyed by colonisation" ("Risks of Myth" 377).

In Leaving the Highway: Six Contemporary New Zealand Novelists Mark

Williams places this Pakeha yearning for Maori culture in the context of 1980s attitudes to literary tradition. He sees this yearning as part of a “post-colonial” approach to cultural identity, one that “would purge local writing habits of Eurocentrism and privilege the indigenous tradition that is considered more appropriate to a Pacific country” (12). For anxious Pakeha attempting to deal with the guilt of a colonial inheritance, this approach is preferable to any that “would preserve the essential links of white culture to its European past” (12). However, it can also be seen as the fulfilment of a “cultural wish” (18), something that sees Pakeha culture remade in accordance with a romanticised view of the indigenous culture. Maori life, lived communally and in harmony with the land can appear to be a preferable alternative to the materialism of industrial societies and seems more appropriate for a country with a proudly held anti-nuclear policy. A deference for things Maori also functions as a “decorative sign of difference” (18) that allows Pakeha to claim a unique identity and a sense of belonging in the Pacific. It is within this context that Wedde’s novel can be understood. Heberley’s emphasis on his Pacific location, his assimilation into Maori society and his firm rejection of colonial values are clear reflections of these contemporary Pakeha concerns. Stead, according to Williams, takes an opposing view of tradition. He clearly rejects the revisionism that a “post-colonial” approach involves. His emphasis is on a European cultural inheritance transmuted by local conditions into something unique to New Zealand. Hugh Grady, in *The Singing Whakapapa*, with his deference for high European culture and interest in pioneering history, reflects these views. Looked at in this way, the two novels represent what Williams sees as the “stark choice offered New Zealanders by some cultural commentators between defining themselves as colonial or post-colonial, European or Pacific” (M. Williams 212).

In “Problems of Originality” Lamb argues that attempts to resolve the difficulties of Pakeha identity and belonging have always been dependent on stark choices. As far back as the 1930s, Pakeha responses to a difficult colonial

past have been characterised by a reliance on binary oppositions such as “home/exile, original/translation, authenticity/falsehood, innocence/guilt, property/theft, realism/fantasy, song/silence, orality/writing” (“Problems” 353). Pakeha place themselves on the negative side of each binary, as evidenced by the emphasis, within literature, on feelings of unreality and alienation within the silent landscape. Later, as Maori are credited with an originary innocence, Pakeha responses to the past are characterised by feelings of guilt or a questioning of one’s right to belong. What Lamb argues, however, is that while Pakeha range themselves initially on the negative side of binary oppositions, they do so in the hope of attaining the positive side. Thus, for Allen Curnow’s generation – the cultural nationalists of the 1930s – the silence of the new landscape could be overcome through realism. A “vital relation to experience” (Curnow, *Book* 17) would allow the cultural nationalist “to make the land his own” (Curnow, *Book* 37). The voice of the Pakeha poet would fill the emptiness of the landscape.

Lamb looks at how this movement between binaries works in a contemporary context. He focuses on Wedde’s introduction to the 1985 *Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*. In the following passage – taken from Wedde’s introduction – Lamb concentrates on the meaning of the term “original”: “the development of poetry in English in New Zealand is coeval with the developing growth of the language into its location, to the point where English as an international language can be felt to be original *where it is*” (Wedde 23). Here, and when Wedde claims that, in New Zealand, English has developed “to the point where we can feel ourselves to be its original poets” (Introduction 29), the coloniser claims an originality which, in the language of binaries, is usually reserved for the indigenous culture. Lamb goes on to suggest that “[p]erhaps there was always an unfortunate, unconscious immodesty in the history of Pakeha guilt” (“Problems” 357). An idealisation of Maori values and culture can lead to an act of appropriation at the “origin”. Thus in the *Penguin* the “originality” gained by poetry written in English is dependent on, and occurs

at the expense of, the Maori inclusions. The indigenous poetry ensures that the English language appears attuned to its “location” but in the process, it has to be removed from its oral context. The majority of Wedde’s audience, unable to read the Maori originals, will rely on the translations, thus ensuring that the Maori poetry is further disengaged from its own “location”. Maori language, then, becomes the “imperfect other” of English, the language which “has won its location, its ground, and can sing on it” (Lamb, “Problems” 357).

Lamb’s analysis of the 1985 *Penguin* provides a framework within which a certain Pakeha response to identity can be understood. The following extract is drawn from Chris Knox’s contribution to King’s *Pakeha* and demonstrates how Lamb’s theory might be applied in a more general context:

We Pakeha, we’re jealous of “our Maoris”, we know they’ve got more claim to this land, and they’re closer to a life-force that’s been diluted away to damn-all in our consciousness, that they understand more about us than we do about them, that they have their own language and art forms and we only have second-hand ones, that they ... they just have ... uh, more depth to ‘em, y’know? So we need to ask them to share with us a second time. Not land, it’s a bit late for that, but what it is to be Maori in Aotearoa, so we may fully discover what it is to be Pakeha in New Zealand. We must convince our fellow settlers that they can trust us with their knowledge, that we will not use their good faith against them as we did a hundred and fifty years ago. (196-97)

Knox begins by establishing a binary between the authenticity of Maori culture and the “second-hand” nature of Pakeha culture. Ultimately, however, he would like to see Pakeha share in Maori authenticity, albeit with Maori permission. That Maori will have to “trust us with their knowledge” suggests that such a

transaction may involve an element of risk. Furthermore, in the course of the extract Maori lose the originality with which they were initially credited, and become “our fellow settlers”. It seems, then, that a Pakeha identification with Maori culture – when combined with a rejection of things European and motivated by colonial guilt – can become another act of colonial appropriation. As Williams points out, “to claim that one has come ‘home’ by virtue of having turned away from the European origin to discover the unique values of indigenous culture is in the interests of the claimants more than it is in those of the native peoples themselves” (M. Williams, *Leaving* 13).

The difficulties apparent in Wedde’s introduction to the *Penguin* and in Knox’s essay reflect a misguided emphasis on the authenticity of origins. According to Lamb in “Risks of Myth: The Politics of New Zealand Literary Journals” the “competition for a myth of perfect origin” (383) dominates cultural debates in the 1980s. He argues that such an emphasis on the purity of origins makes real debate impossible. He refers, also, to the “damage wrought when factions compete for the best *whakapapa* (genealogy), the most commodious *turangawaewae* (standing place), so that the victors can sing their hearts out at the expense of everyone else’s authenticity” (382). Furthermore, an obsession with authenticity constitutes a denial of colonial confusion. A quest for certainty within the present sees the colonial origin ceasing to function as a site of contestation or negotiation. It becomes, instead, a source of clarity; the starting point for a series of competing mythologies. The construction of such a “false beginning” cannot resolve the difficulties of the present and, according to Lamb, Pakeha must learn to put aside any attempt to attain authentic belonging and accept their displacement (“Problems” 358).

King’s ethnic autobiographies betray his desire for an authentic sense of belonging. He is keen to show that while Pakeha culture owes a debt to Europe, it has developed into something unique within the New Zealand context. His

account of a trip to Europe and his emphasis on childhood experiences in New Zealand establish this point. The problem is that he understands the unique nature of Pakeha culture in indigenous terms. *Being Pakeha Now* – King’s recently published revised edition of *Being Pakeha* – is subtitled *Reflections and Recollections of a White Native* and a quote on the cover reads “Pakeha New Zealanders who are committed to this land and its people are no less “indigenous” than Maori”. In using the term “indigenous” in this way, it loses its place within a history of colonialism. Something similar happens in the prologue that begins: “In the beginning we were all immigrants to these islands, our ancestors boat people who arrived by waka, ship or aeroplane” (*Being Pakeha Now*, 11). In stating things in these terms – that is, by focusing on immigration as a common factor between peoples – King overlooks the matter of dispossession. Things are simplified even further when the issue of timing is removed and when authenticity is measured in terms of being a “New Zealander”: “The fact that one group has been here longer than others does not make its members *more* New Zealand than later arrivals” (11). King, then, separates issues of identity and belonging from the history of colonisation.⁴ Such an approach, however, creates its own difficulties. These become apparent as King argues the case for Pakeha “indigeneity” in Maori terms; when he claims, for instance, that “Pakeha born in and committed to New Zealand have no other home, no other turangawaewae” (*Being Pakeha Now* 11). The use of a Maori term to justify a Pakeha presence hints at the sort of competition for authenticity that Lamb describes. Furthermore, King’s understanding of Pakeha culture is established in response to Maori imperatives. This is apparent as he describes, here, what it means to him to be Pakeha: “It is to be a non-Maori New Zealander who is aware of and proud of my antecedents, but who identifies as intimately

⁴ Which is not to say that such issues are unimportant to King. He is keenly aware of that fact that Maori have been unjustly dispossessed and has worked hard to explain this to a Pakeha readership. My point is that he distances such issues from any debate about belonging. For King, the injustices of colonialism become, simply, a matter for redress; something he leaves to the Waitangi Tribunal. See King, *Being Pakeha Now* 237.

with this land, as intensively and as strongly, as anybody Maori” (*Being Pakeha Now* 239). Not only does he establish his “authenticity” in terms that place him in competition with Maori but he assumes an ability to judge the intensity and strength of a Maori identification with the land. As such, his understanding of what it means to be Pakeha bypasses the issue of cultural difference. Kevin Ireland, in his contribution to King’s *Pakeha*, does something very similar:

The same impulse that drove Polynesians across the Pacific, brought Europeans in their wake: people who cannot scientifically be proved to be better or worse than each other, or to be more or less wise, spiritual or sentimental, journeying to New Zealand only a few centuries apart, identical in most of the physical, emotional and psychic dimensions of existence, different mainly in colour, speech and technology. We are one people with different histories. The same instinct to migrate and to identify with our place of birth unites us. (75)

Ireland looks back to the colonial moment and removes the issue of difference. Within a late twentieth century context this serves to undermine the status of Maori as tangata whenua and validate a Pakeha claim to cultural authority. What this suggests is that the coloniser’s disavowal – as identified by Bhabha at the colonial moment – reemerges in Pakeha constructions of the past. It participates in a competition for the most “authentic” origin.

Symmes Hole: The Pakeha Quest for Indigeneity

The narrative of Wedde’s *Symmes Hole* is underpinned by a Pakeha yearning for indigeneity. This culminates in the researcher’s quest for a stone whale, or mauri, that represents, in the novel, an ultimate originality. As the researcher explains, the mauri existed in New Zealand prior to the arrival of

Maori: “The knowledge of it is very old, much older than the priest Ruawhero of the Takitimu canoe who came in here, who could cast spells over whales” (309). References to a spring of pure water emitting from its crown (285, 308) suggest, also, that it represents an absolute purity. It is important that the mauri is in the shape of a whale because the researcher confers on real whales a similar sort of originality. They, too, live beyond history. The researcher muses on this as he watches a whale and her calf in Oriental Bay: “your mature racial occupancy of the planet dates from a time when human ancestors were tree-shrews” (111). Their indigeneity is understood as an ability to live at one with the environment inhabited. Thus, the whales remembered in Oriental Bay “mov[ed] in an effortless choreography, their tons turning and sounding and rising to blow with such a fluent accommodation to the medium in which they lived that they were water moving in the water, they seemed to displace nothing as they swam” (112). The researcher, then, dreams of living as a great whale. He admires in them a fluidity of movement that is approximated only by the Phantom Rollerskater who glides gracefully between buses and around queues on Courtenay Place.

The researcher’s longing for indigeneity can be understood as a response to colonial anxiety. Tellingly, he refers to New Zealand as a “place where proprietors have to keep turning the shame-hot side of their face to a history that’s not much further away than great-grandad” (278). With an acute awareness of history, the researcher is particularly prone to the guilt identified by Lamb as a key factor in 1980s responses to the past. It manifests as a recurring fear of something creeping up on him from behind, something that makes him afraid to look back. This sort of generalised unease runs through the entire novel; it feeds the researcher’s paranoia and hints at broader problems within the culture. A woman at the literary reception identifies a national preoccupation with feelings of fear and panic that manifest as an emphasis on green and blue in the work of New Zealand’s notable artists: “there goes most of your possum-shit New Zealand school ... all those streaky smears of green, talk about loneliness

and fear” (40). Such difficulties are then transferred onto the landscape itself: “the *real world*, all that, those green hills, and all the sea, blue sky ... fear an’ panic ... nausea. It follows” (40). Within the novel, these feelings of unease are countered with images of homeliness or belonging. Thus the researcher relives, within a 1980s context, Heberley’s search for belonging; his desire to “be treated like, have someone *listen* ... woman, house, a home” (103). Heberley finds this, first, in Australia where the “blacks” listen to his story and, ultimately, among Maori in New Zealand. For the researcher, however, the “real” values that indigenous cultures represent have been overtaken by consumer culture. Things of any real value exist only as dusty exhibits in the Dominion Museum or are found, like the baby whale in a freezer at the back of a fish’n’chip shop. The researcher’s search for belonging focuses, increasingly, on a quest for the mauri and on an attempt to establish a connection with Heberley. In the interim, however, his unease plays itself out in a yearning for innocence or maternal protection; what Cynthia Brophy refers to as a “desire to possess the authentic mother” (69). The precedent for this is established at the literary reception where fear and panic are set in opposition to the notion of being “newborn”. The woman at the reception contrasts the green and blue of the mural with “salmonny” colours representing something both intrauterine and sexual, an “*innocent sensuality*” (39). The researcher finds this within the milkbar – “a warm, feminine oasis of comfort” (Brophy 68) – and, more problematically, with Sashay at the end of the novel.

The researcher’s anxiety – countered as it is with a yearning for maternal comfort – can be understood in terms of Lamb’s binary between guilt and innocence. For the researcher, however, Heberley provides a way out. He represents a point of origin that diffuses colonial guilt. As such, the researcher attempts, with the aid of a mystery history drug, to breakdown the historical distance between himself and Heberley and thereby attain the latter’s knowledge of who and where he is. This involves attempts to bring the past into the present;

to defeat the effects of time: “Tell me again how everything passes, I won’t believe you – it’s all there (here)” (252). The researcher’s identification with Heberley’s shellfish meal – something he too had experienced as a child – sees him achieve this break down of historical distance. As Linda Hardy puts it, the meal becomes an “act of communion, which folds history into the researcher’s present” (218). The researcher’s attempts, in the final section of the novel, to track down and interview aging whalers works in a different way. Here he seeks to reassure himself that a strand of “failed” history – initiated by Heberley – has survived into the present. In aligning himself with this, he hopes to displace colonial guilt and achieve a sense of belonging.

What draws the researcher to Heberley is the fact that he represents a starting point for Pakeha history and identity that is distanced from European cultural origins. Heberley’s decision to remain in New Zealand among Maori constitutes a deliberate rejection of his European heritage. He divides his life into two parts, the line of demarcation falling at the point of his arrival in New Zealand (229). As a result, his European past begins to seem somewhat incredible:

“Years since he’d had a thought for ol’ Swindle, any of that – back ...

Weymouth and his mother ... *his father’s German accent ...!*” (208).

Furthermore, Heberley is openly contemptuous of Wakefield’s efforts to transplant England into a New Zealand context: “The Colonel’s vision of an English lawn and a drooping elm and labourers’ housing with allotment gardens was just plain daft” (191). Heberley’s stance grows out of a single moment of realisation that occurs as he stands on a beach in New Zealand and watches the return of a Maori war party. He, effectively, breathes out his European past:

In all his life he had never felt such a swift giddy capsize. It was as though he was swung under for a moment of submerged vertigo, when he felt his ordinary breath rush out; and then swung back, washed clear of everything he’d known – righted, dripping, into

this new world. (219)

This is described by Lamb as a “sublime return to cultural degree zero” (“NZ Sublime” 673). Carrying connotations of purity and innocence, it sees Heberley “washed clear” of his European past and reborn into a new world. As such, the colonial moment, characterised by Bhabha as a site of contestation and uncertainty, is rewritten as a moment of exalted clarity.

Having wiped the cultural slate clean, Heberley signals a new direction with an inhalation of air from the new environment. In breathing in the new atmosphere, he becomes one with his surroundings; something that allows him to approximate the belonging attributed to whales within the water. His new sense of identity is signalled with an adoption of the name “Worser” – derived from the Maori, “tangata whata” (80) – and involves a negotiation of both the new environment and Maori society. The significance of this is considered in conjunction with the act of breathing in:

Worser as he now inescapably was to remain for the rest of his life, stood there in a new world and breathed an original atmosphere through his gaping mouth ... an inspiration that when he breathed out again with a long groan of awe would be his first message to a place in which he would now be able to see great chiefs and a woman he loved with his life, and their children, where the likes of Colonel Wakefield would only see savages. (220)

After a month in New Zealand, Heberley learns to see Maori culture from the inside. As such, he views the return of war canoes decorated with severed heads and hands not as a European but as a participant in Maori society. Suddenly it is his old life that is viewed from the outside. Looking back at the past he sees himself “crawling about on the surface of the water with no purpose more than a

waterbug has on the meniscus above trout" (218) and gratefully submerges himself in the new culture, learning, in effect, to breathe water.

Heberley's emphasis on being at one with the environment is closely associated with an insistence on understanding location. This is something that derives from his experience at sea: "a seaman knows to look at where he is" (202). However, it is not only a matter of geography. An understanding of location, in its fullest sense, is exhibited by the "blacks" in Australia. Heberley is impressed with their ability to live within the limits imposed by the environment and to do so with relative ease: "Off in the darkness behind them was a sudden clatter and screaming of marsh birds; the blacks took no notice. They even know what's happening when they can't see it, he thought" (26). By contrast, Heberley's knowledge of the Australian environment – amounting to an ability to name the stars – accounts for little: "he could find the sea, if he wanted to; but that didn't mean he knew where he was" (26). Any real sense of location involves a knowledge of both the environment and one's place within a community. Heberley recognises this link between identity and location when in New Zealand: "So what you did was, you lived there... you knew where you were, rule number one. Rule number two, you knew *who* you were" (192). Heberley's sense of identity is dependent on his assimilation into Maori society. This is apparent in his description of land negotiations with Ngarewa, his father-in-law: "[T]he look he'd given you at last had said, You're on probation, Pakeha, and this is the good blanket that proves it. And that was who you were; you took him the hapuku when you caught one – where you were didn't mean much without that knowledge" (192). Heberley knows that he must align himself with Maori interests and put aside European assumptions. This gives him tenure in the new land, something that Wakefield's brand of colonialism – which attempts to impose something new on a "place whose contours will resist it" (12) – can never achieve. Wakefield's is an "unnatural colonisation" (12) which is set against what Hardy describes as Heberley's "'natural' occupancy of the land"

(219).

Heberley's emphasis on "location" recalls Wedde's use of the term in his introduction to the *Penguin*. In both cases, an attention to location confers originality. As it is argued in the *Penguin*, the English language becomes original as it grows "into its location" (23), that is, as it assimilates a range of influences particular to the Pacific. Lamb's assertion that this is dependent on, and achieved at the expense of, the indigenous language can, equally, be applied to Heberley's assumption of originality in *Symmes Hole*. The "natural occupancy" that he achieves constitutes, from the researcher's point-of-view, a rewriting of the coloniser's past as innocent. This is clearly dependent on Heberley's assimilation into Maori society. As Lamb states it in regard to Wedde's stance in the *Penguin*: "What a clever way to make the authentic connive in the authentication of the originally inauthentic!" ("Problems" 357).

To the extent that *Symmes Hole* reflects Lamb's theories, Heberley represents, for both the researcher and the reader, the possibility of a move from guilt to innocence. The researcher uses Heberley's "natural occupancy" and obvious contempt for Wakefieldian colonisation to bypass a guilty history of colonialism. As such, Heberley functions as an "anti-colonial" point of origin. For the researcher, an identification with such an origin involves a rewriting of the foundational moments of colonial history. Having learnt that the arrival of Cook coincided with the attempt of a tohunga to call whales onto the beach, he is left to consider the possibility that "Cook didn't just come to the Bay of Plenty, he was *summoned*" (274). This change in point-of-view upsets the power relationship between coloniser and colonised and, in the process, deflates the act of discovery: "Never Trust Anybody, specially not when they come so quick when they're called, around Orete Point in their o-kay (look at *that!*) Big Canoe" (276).

The undermining of official history is part of a process whereby the researcher attempts to decolonise his past. He searches for something authentic beyond European constructions of the Pacific that have dominated Pakeha understanding of both the environment and their role within it. This requires that nineteenth century ideologies are unpacked. Here, for example, he pairs colonial ideals with the realities of their implementation: “Christianity and the pox ... civilisation and influenza ... Enlightenment and muskets” (152). The universalisms on which colonialism relies for its authority are deliberately undermined. They become empty justifications for a colonial process that is, ultimately, destructive and that understands the Pacific as an exploitable resource. The researcher, then, recognises the type of “double speak” that Bhabha identifies within colonial discourse. Bhabha refers to instances of contradictory belief; the coloniser’s need, for example, “[t]o be the father and the oppressor; just and unjust; moderate and rapacious; vigorous and despotic” (96). The researcher is particularly suspicious of European notions of a South Pacific paradise. To understand the Pacific in this way is to refuse any meaningful engagement with its realities. It allows the Pacific to function only as an inverted reflection of all that is flawed in European society. As such, the researcher is approving of Long Ghost – a character borrowed from Herman Melville’s *Omoo* – who expresses his contempt for “the exhausted leer which Europe has fixed upon the savage world, the sick hope of refreshment. Let man live with his history, I say! – and not try to use another’s” (182-83). To highlight the difficulty, the researcher plays on the anxieties that lie behind any notion of paradise. He finds these in Melville’s fictionalised accounts of his Pacific adventures: “But that’s your Pacific – the ‘paradise’ whose other profile has an ashen cheek twitching with dreadful laughter...” (164). Yet in spite of such anxieties, the exploitation of the Pacific continues into the researcher’s present. It comes in the form of American consumer culture, epitomised in the novel by the McDonalds fast food franchise. Erasing difference and ignoring location, McDonalds keeps colonial ideologies alive and contributes to the researcher’s

confusion. The only way out, for the researcher, is through the discovery of an authentic history attuned to Pacific realities. Again, Heberley provides an answer.

Heberley's epiphanic moment on the beach ensures that he represents, for the researcher, a suitably decolonised point of origin. In practice this requires that Heberley put aside his shipboard dream of a South Seas paradise: "Pacific bays, uneasy sunset tinge on their waters, deserted white beaches and motionless trees" (86). Even his desire for a house, a wife and a home requires modification in the face of reality. He realises later that his dream belonged to a European, rather than Pacific, world. As such, it is comparable to Wakefield's dream of a transplanted England: "he'd expected to step ashore into the kind of thing the Colonel was now promising, something readymade" (217). Having put aside his own European preconceptions, Heberley can appreciate the danger that Wakefield poses to Maori: "those word-pictures of drooping elms and workers' houses and English farmyards, and never even a mention of a Maori – where were *they* in all the fancy plans?" (193).

Heberley's stance places him in opposition to the "official" history represented by Wakefield. This establishes the novel as a counter-history, something made clear in the introduction that refers to the value of a "submerged history" (8). Certainly, critics have seen the novel as redressing an imbalance in the perception of New Zealand's past. John McLaren puts it this way: "As Witi Ihimaera does for the Maoris in *The Matriarch*, Wedde recaptures the past for a people whom received history has submerged" (119). Similarly, David Dowling explains that Heberley's "history went 'underground' as the official colonisation and master narrative were imposed" (45). The suggestion is that the whalers and other beach settlers were ignored by history because they were deemed unsavoury. However, during the 1980s, an increased awareness of Pakeha injustice towards Maori sees a reversal in values. Wakefield's "respectability" suddenly looks somewhat dubious, while the values represented by Heberley

make him a more appealing point of origin. The novel does challenge the official story of New Zealand's founding but, because that official story has become so difficult for Pakeha, the novel is no longer subversive. As Mark Williams explains, it ensures that Pakeha are able to deal more easily with the past:

Symmes Hole responds to the liberal Pakeha desire not only to eradicate the imperial legacy (and the guilt that goes with it) but also to validate a new sense of belonging by reexamining the past in terms of that anti-colonialist sentiment. In the unofficial history of Worser Heberley's arrival among the Maori is to be found a means of overcoming Pakeha guilt. (*Leaving* 151)

The novel carries the hope of a new history which, in the changing political climate, legitimises, more effectively than the old, a sense of Pakeha belonging. *Symmes Hole*, then, is securely grounded in the choices that Mark Williams identifies in 1980s constructions of identity. It represents an approach to tradition that plays down the importance of European origins. Emphasis is placed, instead, on an origin constructed retrospectively as indigenous. This carries with it the risks of appropriation identified by Lamb in "Problems of Originality".

The Singing Whakapapa: European Origins

When Mark Williams refers to two opposing views of tradition during the 1980s, it is difficult to separate Stead from the side that favours an emphasis on a European inheritance. If Wedde's response to origins is characteristic of 1980s liberalism, Stead's response, according to Lamb, promotes itself as "Common Sense" and carries considerable popular appeal ("Risks of Myth" 379). For Stead, the fact of a cultural and genetic inheritance from Europe cannot be denied

and the former follows naturally from the latter. To do so because it seems politically expedient is both misguided and dishonest. Indeed, European cultural origins are to be celebrated. In literary terms, this works against insularity and ensures a link with a tradition of excellence: “I am upholding a long and honourable tradition of Western literature – specifically literature in the English language. It is a tradition which gathers within itself a whole civilization – its spirit, its values, its historical record, its imaginative triumphs, its linguistic riches, its experiments with form” (Stead, *Answering* 284). Stead’s position is, however, more complex than this might suggest. Combined as it is with a cultural nationalist stance, it does not constitute either a longing for Europe or a look to Europe as a measure of literary worth. Rather, it is about acknowledging the roots of a culture which has been transmuted into something unique within the New Zealand context. A link to Europe bolsters this culture and should not become a source of anxiety. According to Stead, the difficulties of the Pakeha position have been overstated: “although there has been, and remains, an anxiety at the heart of the colonial and post-colonial experience (and I’m talking here of the colonizers, not of the colonized) there was something untypical, overstated, even ... *willed* in the degree of unease present in some of the early poems of Brasch and Curnow” (*Answering* 137). A sense of alienation, like a sense of guilt, need not be all consuming.

Given Stead’s views on tradition, it is not surprising that, in *The Singing Whakapapa*, Hugh’s understanding of himself rests on a European cultural inheritance. His name, Hugh Wolf Grady – from a German composer – provides the basis of his personality as a child. He sees himself as two boys, Hugo and Wolf, each representing one side of a mixed Northern European and Anglo-Celtic background: “Hugo might have inherited Scottish bones and Irish eyes, but Wolf’s were Swedish brains and Swedish balls” (155). A sense that culture is genetically determined is confirmed by the fact that, in Hugh’s family, a passion for singing goes back four generations. Similarly, Hugh inherits a love of Wagner

from his mother, something he discovers quite unexpectedly on attending a Wagnerian opera in England (49). European culture is something held, almost unconsciously, in the heart and as such it retains its relevance within a New Zealand context. Hugh's mother immerses herself in the life stories of European composers to the point where European culture replaces religion as a source of comfort and certainty. She is, therefore, offended by the suggestion that her children should have been named from the Bible: "That the Bible might be more sacred than the works of the great European composers was not a proposition she would have entertained" (23). A parallel between religion and European culture is also drawn when, at Frank Mangold's funeral, Shakespeare is read in place of religious material.

Hugh's attitude towards his European heritage becomes an issue of cultural authority. He is keen to defend his view of the past from revision and argues that history – as it is studied in the academy – has become unduly concerned with morals. As a result, it has been reduced to a "conventional musical melodrama where cardboard-clad figures [si]ng over and over the same three or four songs to the tune of 'I am white and male and I wrong those who are brown and female'" (142-43). Sarah Williams reads such a response to revisionist history as Hugh's attempt to protect both his possession of history and his cultural authority as a Pakeha male (121). It is an indication of what she describes as his "postcolonial fear" (120). Although Hugh is quick to identify the ideologies operating within revisionist histories, he refuses to acknowledge that his own "common sense" approach is equally ideological. He thinks that an emphasis on the "facts" will ensure the "truth" of his history. As Jean-Anne explains, "[t]here's a temptation to take sides. But that's no good. Only the truth's interesting. That's what we're after" (169). However, in spite of such confidence, Hugh's views of the past are expressed very self-consciously. Here, when considering the effect of lines read from *The Tempest* at Frank's funeral, he works hard to defend his position from one that might dismiss a European

heritage as morally corrupt:

Hugh knew those lines by heart, as dairy-farmer Frank Mangold had known them, half a world and several centuries from that place where, that time when, a writer unimaginably real has first scratched them down. By heart – and *at* heart. There was something to be explained in that fact, by God there was, and that meant (Hugh thinking again as historian) grappling with it, not explaining it away, moralising it out of existence, as if it were enough to say their forebears, his own and Frank's, had blundered into this place (as they had), destroyers (as perhaps they had been), and there was an end to it (as there was not). (14)

For Hugh, Shakespeare is “unimaginably real”; more real, it seems, than the more immediate realities of a colonial past. Furthermore, the meaning of lines from *The Tempest* – a play about a European Duke exercising absolute power over an island and subjecting its prior occupants to servitude – is seemingly unaffected by the context in which they are uttered. Hugh ignores the context of early colonial activity that influences the play⁵ and the fact that it is now often read, critically, in “postcolonial” terms.⁶ He seems oblivious to the irony of using quotes from such a play in defence of colonialism. In defending his views on Shakespeare he does, however, admit somewhat grudgingly to the difficulties of a colonial history. His insistence on the value of a European cultural heritage can even be read as a defensive response to a guilty past. However, Hugh's attitude

⁵ Stephen Orgel, in his introduction to the Oxford edition of *The Tempest*, refers to a ship – part of a fleet of colonists travelling to Virginia in 1609 – driven to Bermuda during a hurricane. An account of this by William Strachey was available in manuscript and Shakespeare, according to Orgel, was “evidently familiar with it” (32). Orgel also refers to twentieth-century interpretations of the play that have focused on colonial themes. The characters of Caliban and Ariel, for instance, can be viewed as examples of the black response to colonialism (83-85).

⁶ See Loomba and Orkin, *Post-colonial Shakespeares*.

to European culture can also be seen as a response to another set of difficulties at the colonial moment.

In *The Singing Whakapapa*, the colonial moment is represented by the experiences of John Flatt, the first of Hugh's forebears to arrive in New Zealand. His position is considerably more complex than Heberley's in *Symmes Hole* because his tenure in New Zealand is dependent on the Church Missionary Society and his dedication to the cause it represents. For Flatt, European preoccupations are not easily put aside. Certainly, in the novel, there is no clear moment of rebirth into the new environment, no sense that a European past can, or should, be forgotten. Rather, the colonial moment, as it is experienced by Flatt, is characterised by cross-cultural misunderstanding. Flatt's journal entries point to a series of encounters with cultural difference that force the missionaries to comply with local custom, not least because they are dependent on the good will of the local chief, Waharoa. Brown draws the line at using Christian funds to pay a tohunga for the lifting of a tapu (60), but such an attempt to preserve Christian authority begins to look somewhat quaint when the missionaries find themselves involved in Waharoa's tribal war. Flatt, especially, struggles with a knowledge of his complicity in bloody acts of war: "More and more he has felt during these past weeks that he and his fellow-missionaries have been compromised – gathered into, and made part of, the ways and doings they are here to deplore and the society it is their role to 'convert'" (72-3). Brown, too, is depressed by the knowledge that their attempts at peace have only involved them more deeply in the conflict and that the Christian message has done little to change anything (88). The return of Tarore's mutilated body in Brown's box serves as a poignant reminder of the failure of their mission. "It was his own box, had been packed with chasuble and surplice, crucifix and candle, framed pictures, household items, odds and ends, prized irrelevancies brought here to the world's end for the comfort of..." (90). The Christian message has not brought comfort; rather, it has become complicit in acts of war. To put it another way, the box – a repository of

the Christian message – when placed in the colonial context is transformed into something quite different and returns with its authority undermined from within. While Brown’s teachings have had little effect on Maori, the return of his box with the body of Tarore has a profound effect on his own confidence in the “civilising” mission.

The problems that Hugh discovers at the colonial moment can be read as a failure of not only the Christian mission, but of the colonial authority it represents. It becomes hybridised. Compromises made by the missionaries and their complicity in Waharoa’s war undermine the ability of Christian discourse to appear authoritative. Adding to the difficulty is an exposure to cultural difference, something that threatens to create – even within missionary ranks – multiple belief. Brown, although more secure in his convictions than Flatt, cannot help but be fearful when Maori chiefs read portents in his house suggesting that it will burn in the next enemy raid: “It is said with such flat conviction, as if it were the result of scientific analysis, Brown has to struggle with himself to achieve the disbelief his own belief requires” (85). The assertion of cultural difference also causes colonial discourse to become uncertain. Flatt’s descriptions of early missionary life recall Bhabha’s account of the difficulties experienced by the Christian catechist outside Delhi in 1817. The authority of the Bible is undermined as the natives, in accordance with pre-existing beliefs, question its teachings (Bhabha 102-22). In *The Singing Whakapapa*, when Maori find contradictions within Christian teachings, Brown attempts to contain the difficulty by putting it down to the “simplicity of the native mind” (61). Flatt, however, suspects that they are being teased and is personally unconvinced by the answers that they are able to provide in response to Maori questioning. Reflecting on his experiences in New Zealand on the way back to England, he confronts the uncertainties that his exposure to such a different world has engendered: “Flatt knew that there was a painful conviction growing within himself that God’s world was larger, richer and more mysterious than could be

accounted for by the Book and the rituals which as a missionary he must declare contained all the answers needful to the human mind and soul" (128). The universalism of the Christian faith – on which it relies for authority within the colonial context – is undermined. Flatt begins to see England and the Church Missionary Society in a new light. They are decentred. London appears a "kind of hell on earth" (129) and the Missionary Society, represented by Reverend Jowett whose words are choked by his clerical collar (131), seems old and out of touch with the world it attempts to administer.

Hugh, then, looks back at the colonial moment and discovers the sort of difficulties with colonial authority that Bhabha identifies within the Indian context. However, Hugh goes on to construct a history that, from the colonial moment onwards, works to confirm the coloniser's position. Within the present, this leaves him confident in his cultural authority and in the value of his European cultural origins. Even Brown, back near the colonial moment, is rewarded with a degree of success. When Ngakuku, Tarore's father, puts utu aside and forgives the murderers of his daughter, Brown feels, at last, that the Christian message is capable of "irradiat[ing] the pagan heart" (92). Furthermore, the history that Hugh uncovers credits Tarore – and the Gospel of St Luke that she carried – with ending intertribal war: "Her Gospel ... had been taken back to Rotorua by her murderers, and was said to have influenced the Arawa chiefs towards Christianity and peace; and then, by some accident or design of fate, it had gone to the camp of the great warrior Te Rauparaha, with the same effect" (273). As such, the civilising message triumphs, in the end, over barbarity. Hugh's thoughts as he examines the view from his bedroom window suggests that such a triumph has been sustained. He considers, first, the surrounding suburbs: "The lights of those modest suburbs, lower Mt Eden, Balmoral, Sandringham, Mt Albert, Avondale, glittered as bright in the clear air as the royal and patrician association of their names suggested they should" (67). These thoughts are juxtaposed with a consideration of the past and the nature of intertribal war: "There was little

about it ... that was glorious or noble or inspiring. It was mostly cold and cruel, duplicitous, heartless and violent" (67). The move from barbarity to civilisation sees Hugh's cultural authority affirmed. In thinking this way, Hugh draws on a mode of colonial justification identified by Bhabha: "Western nationalist discourse ... normalizes its own history of colonial expansion and exploitation by inscribing the history of the other in a fixed hierarchy of civil progress" (Bhabha 95). It is not surprising, then, that in spite of difficult beginnings, Hugh looks to history as a source of comfort (100).

Hugh's confidence in the colonising culture is reflected in his response to the New Zealand landscape. On a visit to Te Aroha he looks out over the plains and considers, approvingly, how "in just a few generations it had been transformed from a wilderness to a richly productive garden" (271). In referring to the landscape as a garden, Hugh implies that it has undergone a process of beautification. It has also been made productive. This suggests that his admiration of the landscape – resting on a European aesthetic and grounded in a notion of economic value – is culturally determined. Changes in the landscape mirror a process whereby colonial values are installed and Flatt, a gardener, can be read as a key player in this process. He creates the garden of history that Hugh sets out to discover: "It was Frank Mangold who first put Hugo Wolf Grady on to the idea that New Zealand history was waiting like a vast garden undiscovered, unexplored, and that he would be the moth to fly out into it" (141). This approach to the colonised landscape contrasts with that of the researcher in *Symmes Hole* who condemns the colonial intervention. English plants rob him of an ability to understand his location: "you look around and suddenly, *English* trees planted on the eroding hillsides, washbrick *haciendas* in bare paddocks Wizard-of-Oz green with superphosphate ... *where am I?*" (Wedde, *Symmes Hole* 47-48).

The gulf between Hugh's approach to a European cultural inheritance and

that of the researcher is indicative of the split in attitudes that Mark Williams describes in *Leaving the Highway*. While the researcher attempts to decolonise his history – to distance himself from constructions of the Pacific reliant on European ideology – Hugh allows these to shape an understanding of who he is. The notion of “paradise” is less, for Hugh, a European idea imposed on the Pacific, than an aspect of his mother’s childhood experience. He does not question her romanticised accounts of life on Malden Island. Here, and in descriptions of Carl Christianson’s work on other Pacific islands, the stereotypes go unchallenged: “The Nauruans themselves did not work – that seemed to be accepted – but received their modest phosphate royalties, spearfished from the reef or took their outrigger canoes beyond it in pursuit of bonito and yellowtail, grew coconuts and pandanus, played games, made love” (257). Such accounts cannot be read, today, without irony. Wedde, in *How to be Nowhere*, presents a more contemporary view of what “paradise” has meant for the Pacific: “It is an island that isn’t there anymore, because it was made of phosphate” (245). Hugh expresses no such indignation, nor does he acknowledge that his mother’s account is blind to any possibility of exploitation. These are his grandfather’s “island adventures” (266) and they form an unquestioned, if self consciously romanticised, understanding of the past.

Hugh’s adherence to a European heritage and his unwillingness to question colonial attitudes can be read as attempts to contain the difficulties of the colonial moment and retain cultural authority within the present. However, Hugh’s loyalty to European culture is combined with a staunch nationalism inherited from Frank Mangold. He learns, for example, that New Zealand has a history that is distinct from Europe’s (54). The truth of this is made apparent to Hugh as a child when he and Frank witness the felling of a kauri for the building of a new farmhouse. The reality of this relived pioneer experience displaces any Eurocentric view of history that would place New Zealand at the margins: “today’s kauri had fallen, hadn’t it? bang in the middle of their world, his and

Hugo's" (141). There is, however, a continuity between Hugh's loyalty to a European heritage and his cultural nationalism. For Hugh, the value of New Zealand's history lies in the heroics of a pioneering past, the story of which narrates the installation of European values. The emphasis, for example, is on clearing the land, something that Hugh acts out as a young man on the family farm:

Soon Hugo was brown with sun and singed with fire. Above the new dam the slopes had been overgrown with gorse and manuka. He was given a primitive oil-burner shaped to a point like a dunce's cap, shown how to cut firebreaks with a slasher, warned to watch the wind, and left alone to burn it off. For his mistakes, if he should make any, there were only wet sacks and a bucket at the edge of the dam. (55)

This emphasis on taming the land contrasts with the views of Heberley and the researcher in *Symmes Hole* who – in rejecting European values and emphasising the importance of location – attempt to live within the parameters established by the environment. For Hugh, however, such experiences forge a personal identity that is grounded in a pioneering past and in his memories of the family farm. As such, he is confirmed in his possession of history.

Hugh's study of family history establishes for him a personal history in New Zealand. The birth of Flatt's son, Joseph, "the first New Zealand baby" (185), gets the "singing whakapapa" under way and begins a process through which his twentieth century descendants can feel at home. However, Hugh's family history also provides a window on an "official" past: the activities of Wakefield, the sack of Kororareka, the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Each of these events is domesticated into personal experience. Thus, Flatt and his family live for a time in Busby's residence – referred to as the "Treaty House" – and

Joseph takes his first steps on the lawn where the Treaty was signed (225). However, Platt's experience of events leading up to the signing ensure that the Treaty is seen in rather confused, even farcical, terms:

First there was the Governor arriving late and flustered, in civilian clothes but, absurdly, wearing his ceremonial hat; then Colenso warning that he did not believe the natives understood the full import of what they were about to sign, and Hobson's irritation at this suggestion; then the chiefs, those who had opposed as readily as those who had spoken in favour, lining up to sign or make their mark. (223)

This account of the signing seems contrary to the respect that the Treaty is now accorded. Today it provides the basis for Maori claims to compensation and is seen by many as the nation's founding document. It may be true that the status it now enjoys has been granted retrospectively; for a large part of the twentieth century it was virtually ignored by Pakeha. However, the Treaty that Hugh encounters through his research is secondary to family history and, as such, the significance accorded to it in the final decades of the twentieth century can be ignored. Hugh's attitude towards a colonial past ensures that the Treaty remains, in the history he establishes, a moment of uncertainty.

Hugh's treatment of the Treaty suggests an unwillingness to negotiate his sense of belonging with the indigenous culture. However, elements of both cultural competition and cultural borrowing are apparent in the way that Hugh articulates his attitude towards England and the family history that grew out of it: "It was the pakeha Hawaiki, ultimate setting out point of the singing whakapapa" (144). Hugh seems unaware of the difficulties inherent in any attempt to express the value of a European heritage in terms taken from the indigenous culture it disrupted. For Hugh, European culture has – within the

New Zealand context – absorbed elements of the indigenous in an unproblematic manner and he is willing to make use of this when asserting his own cultural authority. Thus, in emphasising his ties to a particular geographical area – in this case Mt Eden – Hugh draws on an element of what constitutes the basis of Maori belonging. His mother does something similar when, in old age, she initiates an oral history. This involves sitting in the Mt Eden shopping centre telling the family history to strangers: “And it was important that it should be told here in Mt Eden, in sight of the hill. Stories, she believed, even the forgotten ones, were like a fragrance released. They remained in the air of the place” (190). What this suggests is that Pakeha attempts to find a voice in the new land involve, almost inevitably, a competition with the indigenous culture for authenticity.

Hugh’s response to the colonial moment is, like the researcher’s in *Symmes Hole*, as much a reflection of late twentieth century attitudes as an investigation of the past. However, the responses of Hugh and the researcher are markedly different. For Hugh the colonial moment is a site of cultural confusion that sees the coloniser’s authority undermined. For the researcher the colonial moment, represented by Heberley, is a source of clarity. It is something to be regained. Each approach – although markedly different from the other – attempts to rewrite the past in order to validate, in personal terms, a sense of Pakeha belonging. The two approaches are nevertheless representative of two different attitudes to history and tradition. For Hugh, the authenticity of a European cultural heritage is affirmed. History becomes the story of a progression away from difficulties at the moment of contact towards a point where Hugh can feel confident in his own cultural authority. The researcher, however, takes an “anti-colonial” approach. Heberley is such an attractive point of origin because, washed clean of his European past, he steps outside European ideologies and makes himself at home in New Zealand among Maori. For the researcher, an identification with Heberley achieves a move from guilt to innocence by ensuring that a difficult colonial legacy is displaced. Hugh’s history, protected from revisionism by an insistence

on “truth to experience”, also alleviates settler guilt. Colonialism, however difficult, is justified as the source of civility and cultural excellence. In the following chapter I look at how, given such an emphasis on the alleviation or avoidance of colonial guilt, Pakeha constructed their histories during the final decades of the twentieth century.

Chapter Two: Anti-conquest

The Problem of History

Maurice Shadbolt's memoir *From the Edge of the Sky* reveals his concern with questions of identity and belonging, many of which are related to his perception of history. Recalling a trip to Russell in the Bay of Islands – the site of “New Zealand's first collisions with history” (39) – Shadbolt wonders why writers have ignored the stories that the area holds. He suspects that New Zealanders are afraid of their past: “The mystery would dog me for decades. It might have been charitable to put it down to national amnesia, to New Zealanders' indifference to their history. Or was it fear of that history?” (40). However, for Shadbolt, a lack of history is felt as a loss. Like Frank Mangold in *The Singing Whakapapa* (54), he complains that his teachers and parents taught him no New Zealand history: “I was fathered by the frontier, though I was slow to learn it. No one felt the need to tell me, not even my ostensible parents. Nor were my teachers any more informative” (30). An emphasis on English history, in the classroom and in textbooks, obscures a dynamic local history. For Shadbolt, it prevents any real engagement with the history of his pioneering forebears and suggests that there is something shameful about the past: “I was like some sinfully conceived child whose origins had to be hidden” (30). More importantly, a refusal to engage with, or even acknowledge the existence of, New Zealand history accounts for an inability to feel at home: “None of this belonged to us. The country didn't belong to us, not yet” (31). Shadbolt's memoir – beginning with his return to New Zealand, from England, on the first day of 1960 – can be read as an account of a relived settler experience. It is concerned, primarily, with his attempts to come to terms with this “strange land” (34) and with himself. The difficulties he faces recall the experiences and anxieties of the cultural nationalists in the 1930s; the land is silent and lonely and threatens to make him a stranger, a “lost child of the frontier” (35).

When Shadbolt complains of New Zealanders' indifference to their history, he touches on a difficult issue for Pakeha. Dealing with history is never easy or straightforward in a culture with a colonial past. For the coloniser, it involves coming to terms with a legacy of guilt: the violence and fraud of the colonial process and the dispossession of the indigenous inhabitants. Combined with this is what Turner, in "Settlement as Forgetting", refers to as the "grief of settlement" (29); the dislocating effects of making a home in a new country. Feelings of unreality, anxieties about place and identity are indicative of such difficulties. For Turner, they arise out of a set of contradictory demands in regard to the old country: "To resist the indigenous presence the settler must retain some sense of the old-country self to be able to draw on a strong and authoritative identity. But in order to settle in the new country, to find oneself at home, the settler must forget the old country and become acclimatised" ("Settlement" 21). There is, then, a tension between a reliance on imperial authority (combined with a sense of loss, exile, being cut adrift) and a desire to establish a new identity independent of the parent culture. The central tenet of Turner's argument is that Pakeha have dealt with this "trauma of dislocation" ("Settlement" 20) by forgetting. Pakeha culture is constructed ahistorically and is about "living in the present, or *living without history*" (Turner 21), something that involves forgetting the indigenous presence. Pakeha are unwilling to see themselves as colonisers and, instead, attempt to understand their culture as original. As Turner puts it, "[s]ettlers do not think they are immigrants, or conceive of their culture as diasporic, and prefer to think they are indigenous" ("Settlement" 22). Such forgetfulness can be read as a measure of complacency; a sense that the Pakeha position – assured by the weight of settlement and threatened only by the "tenacious historical memory and insistent presence of Maori" (22) – need not be examined. Equally, an inability to confront a painful past can – as Shadbolt suggests – be taken as a measure of fear.

Shadbolt is impatient with a Pakeha neglect of history because it is a

knowledge of the past that provides, for him, a renewed sense of belonging in New Zealand. The work of artist Colin McCahon suggests to him that this is a “heroic land” (*From the Edge* 110) with stories worth knowing. Another painter, Eric Lee-Johnson, encourages him in a similar direction: “Eric put me in touch with post-pioneer New Zealand. The New Zealand, that is, which hungered for its history, thirsted for its stories. Eric encouraged me to think that some might be mine to tell” (*From the Edge* 29). A desire to make other New Zealanders aware of their history motivates him to write about the New Zealand Wars in *Season of the Jew*, *Monday’s Warriors* and *The House of Strife*. He validates these histories by emphasising, in an interview with Patrick Holland, the importance of getting things right: “In handling this material, there is virtue in shedding light, and that recognition has made me more scrupulous than the average historical novelist” (Holland 70). In this way, Shadbolt fills the silences of the new land and moves across the binary of silence and song identified by Lamb in “Problems of Originality”. Loneliness and isolation are circumvented by facing up to a fearful history and retelling it in a realist (and therefore “truthful”) manner: “Traditionally the way out of the deafening hush and towards some modicum of authenticity has been realism; the stern avoidance of fantasies and fantods in the pursuit of what can accurately be seen and uttered” (Lamb 354). Such a history is validated further by borrowing from the “authenticity” of the indigenous position. Taking his cue from Pine Taiapa – a Maori carver who works to preserve Maori narratives – Shadbolt declares that his mission is to tell the “tales of [his] tribe” (*From the Edge* 177). He sees himself, finally, as a “tribesman too, a Polynesian pale in colour” (165), something that recalls King’s use of the term “white native” in the subtitle of *Being Pakeha Now*. What we see, in both cases, is a move from guilt to innocence at the expense of the indigenous position.

As Shadbolt’s stance suggests, just having a history can be a comfort. But, given the difficulty of a colonial past, what sort of history does a colonising

culture construct? How do we deal with history if, as Turner suggests, we are so keen to forget? Turner's analysis of Pakeha approaches to the past and to cultural identity suggest that the writing of history can actually constitute a forgetting of history. A difficult past can be reframed in such a way as to avoid guilt and to prevent any real engagement with a legacy of colonialism. The novels I am looking at by Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt all work within a context that makes this a central concern. Although Shadbolt is primarily a historical novelist, he has "always been and remains an intensely topical writer" (Calder, Review of *Ending the Silences* 105). His approach to the past always reflects current preoccupations and responds to contemporary demands. If colonial injustices were becoming, in the late 1970s and 1980s, increasingly difficult to ignore, Shadbolt's trilogy would rewrite the past in acceptable terms and, at the same time, ensure that a "missing" history was restored to Pakeha. A similar process is at work in *Symmes Hole*. The researcher displaces a history of "unnatural colonialism" (12) and the difficulties that go with it by inheriting Heberley's history and the "natural terms of his occupancy" (12). In Stead's novel, an insistence on the separation of fact from morality ensures that Hugh is free to draw on history without any engagement with the problems it represents. His "singing whakapapa" provides him with a past in this country without constituting a threat to his cultural authority.

Anti-Conquest

My analysis draws on that of Mary Louise Pratt who, in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, looks at eighteenth and nineteenth century writings by Europeans about Africa, the Caribbean and South America. These are writings from what she terms the "contact zone", "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable

conflict” (Pratt 6). Pratt’s interest, like Bhabha’s, is in the articulation and production of colonialist authority. As such, she reads travel texts as documents seeking to legitimate a European colonialist presence. Her readings identify the conventions of representation which serve to do this and which produce, for the European reader, the colonised subject. Central to Pratt’s analysis is the concept of the “anti-conquest”. She uses this term to refer to the “strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony” (7). The anti-conquest, as narrated in travel and exploration writing, works to overcome the guilt associated with colonisation. It avoids any overt reference to the act of conquest, to the enslavement of indigenous peoples and to the appropriation of land and resources. In the narrative of anti-conquest, such active forms of domination are replaced with passive forms. This may involve the application of a European aesthetic or a rewriting of the colonial process in terms of reciprocity either in trade or romance. These things, presented as benign but dependent on the same universalist assumptions identified by Bhabha, obscure the impact of colonial domination.

Pratt’s readings of travel writing show that the coloniser, at the colonial moment, conceives of his/her intervention as anti-conquest. It seems, also, that Pakeha today, looking back at the colonial moment and establishing a history from that point, continue to do so. The features of anti-conquest that Pratt identifies at the colonial moment become, in a late twentieth century context, features of our fictionalised history. With reference to *Symmes Hole* and *The Singing Whakapapa*, I want to show how elements of anti-conquest, modified and used in conjunction with other strategies, enable Pakeha to live in a continued state of historical forgetfulness. Shadbolt’s New Zealand Wars trilogy is especially important in that it deals with wars of conquest, or what James Belich describes as wars of “European expansion” (15). Given that, according to Belich, the wars have always been constructed in such a way that Pakeha

authority is assured, how do Shadbolt's novels function as revisionist texts? How are features of anti-conquest used to ensure that the novels remain acceptable to a late twentieth century Pakeha readership?

Pratt's analysis of the transracial romance is particularly useful in this respect. She contends that, in eighteenth and nineteenth century travel writing, an emphasis on romance allows colonial exploitation to be rewritten as reciprocity: "It is easy to see transracial love plots as imaginings in which European supremacy is guaranteed by affective and social bonding; in which sex replaces slavery as the way others are seen to belong to the white man; in which romantic love rather than filial servitude or force guarantee the willful submission of the colonized" (97). Pratt argues that the European traveller rewrites a standard practice of colonial sexual exploitation – that is, the male traveller's taking of a native concubine – into an ideal of romantic reciprocity (95-96). In this way, the status of the indigenous woman as a possession of the coloniser is obscured. This is clearly important in a late eighteenth century climate of abolitionism. However, Turner's analysis of contemporary Pakeha culture suggests that romance remains a central factor in our understanding of a colonial or pioneering past. With reference to the film *The Piano* and its treatment of Maori and Pakeha he argues that "important issues of culture, gender and colonialism are phrased in terms of romance" ("Settlement" 24). Such a construction of the past "enables the forgetting of processes of settlement" (24). Contemporary stories of colonial beginnings, then, remain dependent on the romantic narrative. Certainly, the transracial romance is a key factor in Shadbolt's trilogy and in *Symmes Hole* and *The Singing Whakapapa*. In each of these five novels a male European character, with a central role in the narrative, either marries or has a sexual relationship with a Maori woman.

Analysis of these novels suggests that romance can be used to rewrite a key element of the colonising process: the appropriation of land. Land

acquisition is not a matter of dispossession, but a function of romance. This is particularly apparent in *Season of the Jew*. Fairweather is reluctant to see himself as a colonist and is critical of any attempt to take land from Maori by violent conquest. However, his relationship with Meriana Smith ensures that he is offered land without so much as having to ask. In fact, he is offended to discover that an offer of taking up residence in the Smith household – which includes taking over the title of their land – is a ploy to protect it from confiscation (173). Meriana also confers on Fairweather a degree of indigeneity by giving him access to Maori society. That this is in danger of being confused with a form of ownership is apparent in Meriana's offer to take him into Tuhoe country: "I am offering you the Urewera mountains" (74). Fairweather's relationship with Meriana, then, disguises his role as coloniser by ensuring that he is invited into Maori society. In this sense, Shadbolt's historical narrative works in much the same way as the narratives that Pratt examines from the colonial moment. This is particularly apparent in his characterisation of Meriana, a "conspicuously strange woman" with a "pleasingly pictorial silhouette against sunlit sea" (20). "[A]nimated, articulate, and in lovemaking equally eloquent" (21), she is, as Ralph J. Crane puts it, "presented in a way that epitomises the nineteenth-century eurocentric view of native woman as sexually skilled, exotic Other" ("Windows" 104). In *Symmes Hole*, Wedde has, at least, updated the stereotype. However, the narrative of anti-conquest works in a similar way. Heberley's Maori wife, although not actually named in the novel, ensures his access into Maori society. He negotiates the purchase of land from her father. It is this, and his determination to take "his wife's people's part" (206) in all things, that constitutes the basis of his "natural occupancy". Colonialism is rewritten as a personal search for something simple and real; for someone to listen, for pigeon pie, a woman, a house, a home.

In *The Singing Whakapapa*, a colonial past is, again, figured in terms of romance. For Hugh, the past becomes explicable when he learns the truth of

Flatt's relationship with Tarore. Flatt's trip, in old age, to the grave of "someone he had loved very much" (282) is finally understood and all the pieces of a puzzle fall into place. This has ramifications beyond family history. Hugh thinks not just about his own history but about how Pakeha, in general, might conceive of their past. Therefore, in framing his story as a romantic mystery, Hugh not only takes possession of his family history, but establishes a means with which the past, in broader terms, can be understood. He also learns to understand the present more clearly. Within the novel, parallels are drawn between Hugh's relationship with Lydia and Flatt's with Tarore. Both involve an older man in a position of power, and a significantly younger woman. The parallel is highlighted by the fact that both Hugh and Flatt are forced to leave New Zealand and sail for England when the relationships end (121). There are also repeated references to the juxtaposition of items on Hugh's desk: "in the fading light beside the photograph of Tarore's grave lies Lid's long-ago letter in green ink" (109). More importantly, the revelation of Flatt's relationship with Tarore is set alongside Hugh's discovery that Jean-Anne is his daughter to Lydia. This intertwining of past and present means that the difficulties of the colonial moment – when framed in "romantic" terms – can be resolved within Hugh's present. Or, to look at it another way, the colonial past functions, for Hugh, as a means of self-discovery. The difficulties of history cease to be an issue as soon as Hugh resolves the problems of his own romantic past.

The coloniser may also draw on romance in an attempt to negotiate a relationship with the new landscape. This grows out of a cultural nationalist stance, something inherited by Hugh but best exemplified by Fairweather in *Season of the Jew*: "New Zealand parades too many charms to be left alone long. A foolish virgin, perhaps. If not to be wooed and won by us, then by some other. Englishmen may not be dextrous in the wooing; they are in the winning" (72). As Turner puts it in "Settlement as Forgetting" the colonial country is "conventionally figured as a woman" (22). He quotes Charles Brasch who, in

his poem “The Silent Land”, describes the need for a man “to lie with the hills like a lover”.⁷ This can be understood as another form of anti-conquest: a rewriting of the coloniser’s appropriation of land in benign terms. In *The Singing Whakapapa* both Flatt and Brown associate Tarore with the landscape. Brown, for example, reflects on her “cleverness, something like wit that seemed to mock him, a quality that sparkled like the best morning light across the plains and that would therefore, and for as long as his life lasted, be confused in his mind with the landscape which was her tribal territory” (90). Flatt’s memories of Tarore are also confused with “a beautiful landscape remembered from long ago” (281) and it is the landscape, or the “place itself” (284) that finally reveals to Jean-Anne and Hugh the circumstances of Tarore’s death. What this suggests is that the coloniser’s sexual possession of the native is inseparable from a possession of the land. The indigenous woman not only provides access to the land – as in Wedde and Shadbolt – but becomes interchangeable with it.

Pratt identifies many forms of anti-conquest and the traveller’s relationship with the landscape is an important aspect of many of them. She looks, for example, at how the empty or undeveloped landscape functions in the narrative of anti-conquest: “unexploited nature tends to be seen in this literature as troubling or ugly, its very primalness a sign of the failure of human enterprise. Neglect became the touchstone of a negative esthetic that legitimated European interventionism” (149). A landscape understood as free of the indigenous presence and occupied only by the European traveller justifies European intervention on economic grounds and serves the purposes of European expansionism. In *The Singing Whakapapa* Ethel Elena understands her father’s work on various Pacific islands in these terms. On Nauru, for example, Carl Christianson helps attend to the “profitable business of the island” (259), something that the inhabitants have, apparently, chosen to forego: “Inland on

⁷ The line, as it appears in Curnow’s *A Book of New Zealand Verse 1923-50*, 2nd ed, reads “Man must lie with the gaunt hills like a lover” (133).

the plateau which the Nauruans had always neglected ..." (257). Carl becomes the beneficent overseer who, aware of the injustices faced by the workers, reminds himself that it is not a perfect world (258). Hugh does not question his mother's understanding of Carl's work in the Pacific. His approach to history ensures that he need not: "Every new fact was a precious stone. Opinion was only the bad breath of the ideologues clouding the mirror; moralising was a fog in the garden of his dream" (143). However, an acceptance of such narratives means that he is spared any real engagement with a history of colonisation in the Pacific.

Hugh's understanding of the past is dependent on a need to rewrite his authority as passive. This explains his and Jean-Anne's decision to think of Flatt not as a colonist, or even a missionary, but as a gardener (174). Sent to New Zealand as a horticulturalist and employed, in later years, as a gardener on "Colonial Government land" (280), Flatt plays a benign role in colonial history. His position lends itself well to a view of colonialism which emphasises, not violence or fraud, but the economic utilisation of land. Similarly, Flatt's role is easily accommodated within Hugh's understanding of colonisation as an aesthetic project that transforms wilderness into garden (271). Hugh ponders this as he looks out over the landscape from a tower at the racecourse in Te Aroha. It is significant that he makes such observations from the height of a tower and that, back in Auckland, he compiles his history from a desk looking out over the lower slopes of Mt Eden. In this way he assumes a position of dominance over the landscape, effectively applying his own cultural preoccupations to it. This allows him to take possession of both the landscape and the history that is located there. As his eye scans the landscape he becomes, in Pratt's terms, a "seeing-man".

The seeing-man is described by Pratt as "he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess" (7). She describes how, in Victorian narratives of travel and exploration, the passive act of seeing becomes an act of domination and a

justification of colonial intervention. As such, she considers the seeing-man to be the “main protagonist of the anti-conquest” (7). Of particular importance is the “monarch-of-all-I-survey scene” (205). Here, the European explorer describes a view, usually as seen from a promontory (or a balcony in more recent times). Pratt identifies a set of conventions that govern such scenes. First, “the landscape is *estheticized*” (204), that is, the view is described as a painting. Secondly, “*density of meaning* in the passage is sought. The landscape is represented as extremely rich in material and semantic substance” (204). This is achieved with the use of adjectives, many of which add referents from English culture into the African landscape. Thirdly, the explorer adopts a position of mastery over the view. The seeing-man “is both the viewer there to judge and appreciate it, and the verbal painter who produces it for others. From the painting analogy it also follows that what [he] sees is all there is, and that the landscape was intended to be viewed from where he has emerged upon it” (204). The civilising project is, again, seen as an exercise in beautification. For Hugh – looking out over the landscape from the tower at the racecourse – this involves the application of a European aesthetic. As such, his narrative maintains a dynamic based on an assumed European superiority. It is, however, Fairweather in *Season of the Jew*, who becomes the archetypal seeing-man.

Fairweather, as an artist, finds it difficult to view the landscape in anything other than aesthetic terms. With the principles of John Ruskin in mind, he attempts to manipulate his view of the local landscape into something ordered and harmonious: “Fairweather, despite his inclination, was often fastidious. The winnowing of symmetry from the world could make him sweat, for he sometimes believed in its existence” (57). Even in the midst of colonial war, Fairweather can be found “sketchbook on knee, pencil in hand, trying to find harmonies in men, horses and trees in the fading light” (116). The nature of colonial conflict is reinterpreted, even as it occurs, in accordance with a European aesthetic. In other instances, such as when Fairweather visits the waterfall, his eye works on the

landscape itself. The language used by Shadbolt to record the whole event – filtered as it is through the consciousness of his focal character – ensures that Fairweather becomes a “monarch-of-all-I-survey”. Led to the waterfall by Hamiora, he plays out a narrative of discovery and quickly assumes a position of mastery over the scene:

Hamiora parted last leaves, and Fairweather looked out on an engagingly wide waterfall. The water billowed out of the belly of the land, fine and transparent, frilled thinly with foam, to crash and crackle on rocks thirty or forty feet below. There was much to commend it. The giant ferns and many-trunked palms framing it, for example; the tangles of white debris dumped by flood at its foot.
(67)

Even before Fairweather begins to sketch, he responds to the waterfall in aesthetic terms. The scene presents itself as a painting, the ferns and palms providing a frame. Fairweather feels free to evaluate the view and goes on to express his satisfaction to Hamiora by referring to the scene as a “feast” (67), a term that suggests it is intended for his consumption. Later, when Fairweather begins to sketch the waterfall, he is careful to choose a vantage point that allows him to look down on it:

He picked his way along dry bank, among boulder and bush, until at last looking down on the water as it leapt. The sinews of its surge were apparent. From a precarious roost, with legs and arms braced against rock, he raced quick visual notes before daylight left. First impressions travelled furthest; the first blow was the best of the battle. It seemed he had a commanding height with the campaign barely begun. (68)

The use of military language in this passage is indicative of Fairweather's struggle to achieve a sense of dominance over the scene. Here, and in the following passage, the act of looking involves the imposition of an ordering aesthetic: "Anarchic water was a challenge, not least to Ruskin's first law, that of organic unity. Where water warred with earth and air, nature's design was under siege and less than apparent. It was Fairweather's aspiration to raise the siege and bring relief" (61). The coloniser's often violent relationship with the land is rewritten as passive even as the military terms are retained. Again, when reference is made to the waterfall being "wooed" (69), the emphasis is on passivity, although, in this instance, Fairweather's dominance is rewritten in terms drawn from the romantic anti-conquest.

Ferdinand Wildblood, in *The House of Strife*, represents another variation on the nineteenth century seeing-man. This is apparent in his description of the New Zealand landscape as seen from aboard ship: "It was a morning of music – of mysterious mists, crying seabirds and wave-lapped wilderness – fashioned for Ferdinand Wildblood" (31). Wildblood's initial impressions of New Zealand reflect his aspirations as a poet. The landscape is viewed in accordance with a set of imaginative preconceptions: "Lofty hills soared all about, arcadian coves, and islets dripping with spray" (31). This is a "land awaiting a scribe" (30), a land that if not entirely intelligible, allows its difficulties to be expressed in European terms. Thus, Wildblood's initial impressions of Heke are dependent on an aesthetic drawn from epic: "Heralded by hoofbeats and baying dogs, he rose shadowy out of New Zealand forest on a misty midwinter morning. As he took potent shape he might well have been mistaken for the young Alexander among hounds, horses and kinsmen in the mountains of Macedonia" (1). While this ensures that Heke is "no disappointment" (1), their meeting remains "better unremembered" (1). The royal haughtiness attributed to Heke ensures that he is unapproachable, the fiction too great for reality. Wildblood has more success when he allows his literary alter ego, Henry Youngman, to come to the fore in his

dealings with Heke. Youngman, the author of romanticised South Pacific adventures such as *Sirens of a Savage Shore* and *Murder Most Maori*, domesticates Heke to his own fictional reality while casting himself as a friend and ally. This is possible only because Heke, having already discovered the work of Youngman, is so keen to be understood in such terms. He sleeps with copies of Youngman's tales under his pillow and measures his actions against an ideal that they represent. Indicating that a European aesthetic has a place in the colonial terrain prior to Wildblood's arrival, this furthers Wildblood's attempt to reconcile his New Zealand experiences with fictional reality. Angela, for example, becomes a stereotypical South Seas maiden: "She was also familiar. She was the ethereal belle of Blackguard Beach in the flesh. Life, in its pedestrian fashion, was again aping art" (44). Writing himself into one of Youngman's adventure stories, Wildblood ensures that New Zealand becomes a setting for his own heroics, all carefully narrated as anti-conquest. He never has to engage with the reality of colonial conflict.

The features of anti-conquest that Pratt identifies in eighteenth and nineteenth century travel writing reappear in our fictional histories and suggest a continuity with the project of colonialism. However, any narrative written at the end of the twentieth century has to function differently from a narrative composed at the colonial moment. Early colonial attitudes, even when presented in terms of anti-conquest, do not always sit well within contemporary fiction. Shadbolt's novels provide evidence that the romantic anti-conquest, unmodified, can today seem dated and therefore unconvincing. As a result he has to compensate with an ironic tone that obscures his method. However, the gap between stories constructed at the colonial moment and their reconstruction in the 1980s is best illustrated in a different way by *Symmes Hole*. This narrative – which draws on the journal of the historical Heberley – is, as Hardy puts it, a "(twice-told) story of 'natural occupancy'" (217). Heberley's story, as recorded in his journal, is already constructed in terms of anti-conquest: "I took a Wife I

bought her for a Blanket, she was not a Slave, it is a rule to give something to their friends” (qtd. in Hardy 220). Although this falls short of romantic anti-conquest – the emphasis is on the “transactional rather than [the] sentimental” (Hardy 220) – an ideal of reciprocity remains. It obscures an assumption of dominance which is otherwise apparent in the fact that, according to Hardy, Heberley does not bother to mention the name of his wife or any of her whanau in the journal (220). Even though Heberley’s emphasis is on exchange, Wedde needs to rewrite his story in order that it be acceptable to a late twentieth century audience. He updates the narrative of anti-conquest and, like Shadbolt and Stead, draws on additional strategies in order to fulfil the requirements of a late twentieth century Pakeha readership intent on forgetting.

Disidentification with Official History

One of these strategies, central to the workings of *Symmes Hole*, is the disengagement of the individual from the official history of colonisation. Heberley’s contempt for Wakefield not only emphasises his opposition to colonisation, but makes him a victim of it. He places himself in the position of victim *alongside* Maori: “the bad would land on the Maori first and on the likes of him and Barrett next” (205). As Hardy indicates, this is a rewriting of the historical Heberley: “the nineteenth-century Heberley is more complicit than his modern fictitious double with the project of colonisation” (222). She argues that between Wakefield and Heberley there was not contempt but a “competitive *alliance*” (220). Thus when the nineteenth-century Heberley climbs Mt Taranaki with the naturalist, Doctor Dieffenbach, he expresses a “thoroughly colonial desire” (Hardy 222) in wanting to name it Mt Victoria. Wedde ensures that his own Heberley is rather more astute or, at least, attuned to late twentieth century attitudes. The fictional Heberley, in distancing himself from colonial practices and in playing tricks on Wakefield, suggests to the contemporary reader that colonialism, as he lives it, can be understood as the surrendering of European

culture. Hardy identifies this strategy as part of a broader trend in contemporary culture: “the politics of racial and cultural domination and resistance are displaced and refigured in terms of an erotic and aesthetic *deficiency* in European culture” (214). It allows the “making of a settlement without a colony” (214), that is, it constitutes another form of historical forgetting.

The researcher in *Symmes Hole* inherits Heberley’s contempt for Wakefieldian colonisation. This is apparent in his reaction to place-names commemorating key figures of colonial history; a reference to Point Jerningham – named after Edward Jerningham Wakefield who we are told “set fire to a whole mountainside of virgin forest in the Pelorus Sound winter of 1839 because he wanted to see what a *really* big blaze looked like” (79) – is followed by the bracketed “little twerp” (242). An attempt to inherit Heberley’s “natural occupancy” allows the researcher to set himself apart from such a legacy. He need not feel any obligation to negotiate, on a personal level, the injustice of colonialism or the dispossession of Maori. More importantly, the researcher can, like Heberley, see himself as a victim. Wakefield’s brand of colonisation grows, in the mind of the researcher, into the neo-imperialism of American consumer culture. He draws a mass of connections between American economic imperialism represented by McDonalds, a history of colonialism and an attempt, funded by Jeremiah N Reynolds, to find Symmes Hole: “The Renaissance wanted to ‘civilise’ Caliban ... the Enlightenment wanted to appropriate ‘natural innocence’ ... and Jeremiah Reynolds wanted to get *inside* – and his descendants did: nuclear submarines and fast food” (154). Somewhere within this chain of events, Pakeha become victims of a new wave of colonisation.⁸

⁸ Mark Revington, in an article for the *Listener* (3 Feb. 2001), touches on something similar in regard to the selling of New Zealand assets during the 1980s: “What does it mean to be a Pakeha in Branch Office New Zealand, experiencing that same sense of dispossession that our ancestors inflicted upon Maori? Is it just a verbal lifeboat in a cultural storm, something to cling to when the paranoia about our place in the world gets too much? We’re all in the same waka now” “White Man’s Burden” p 20.

“Official history” is no longer that represented by Wakefield but by McDonalds. In this way, Pakeha culture is rewritten as marginal. And if this sounds difficult, the researcher can always take solace in Sashay’s advice and forget history altogether: “Well, you can’t read the future, and you’ve dropped the past, my advice to you is to put everything you’ve got left on the present. Stake the lot. It’s all there is. You can’t lose” (313).

The novels of Shadbolt’s trilogy are also reliant on a disengagement from “official” history. Although all of his European protagonists have a clear involvement in the New Zealand Wars, each remains distinct from the imperial command who write and represent “official” history. This is most apparent in *Monday’s Warriors* when Bent, having been mistreated in the army, fights on the side of Maori. Similarly Wildblood, in *The House of Strife*, casts himself in a peacemaking role between the two sides and has considerable sympathy for Heke. In *Season of the Jew* Fairweather, a hero within the imperial army, is philosophically at odds with that army and with the colonial project in general. He openly questions what they are fighting for: “If this campaign is one for land, rather than the peace of the realm, desirably colonists should be fighting their own battles” (8). Adopting a (strangely) twentieth century point-of-view, he ironises the nineteenth century views of those around him. Whitmore, then, when seen through Fairweather’s eyes, conforms to a colonial stereotype: “Colonel George Whitmore, in faded imperial regalia, sword at his side, was cutting a martial dash through the colony again” (106). Readers, in identifying with Fairweather, are free to laugh at Whitmore’s arrogance and frequent bad judgment, therefore distancing themselves from the colonialism he represents. Shadbolt ensures also that his protagonist is distanced from any atrocities committed against Maori: “They came to their first village. Fairweather arrived only minutes after the massacre. Bodies of male tribesmen, sometimes spent firearms alongside, lay outside dwellings beginning to burn; there were cries from wounded within. To pacify Fairweather, women and children had been spared” (318). When

Fairweather *is* implicated in atrocities, he declares that he is the victim of forces beyond his control: "I thought to tamper with the inevitable, bring it to heel. Instead I helped fashion it. Fate enslaves all" (162). On another occasion, he explains that he is "in the canoe of war, but [can] neither direct nor steer. The canoe cannot stop" (271). Not only is his own involvement fated and therefore beyond his responsibility but, the colonial process is itself inevitable. Titokowaru's attitude in *Monday's Warriors* also suggests that this is the case. His fatalism is apparent when, at the end of their ordeal, he says to Big and Demon: "The war was not yours to win". From the outset, "[i]t was [his] to lose" (286). Such thinking points to a historical determinism that leaves Maori doomed to be colonised. The corollary is that settler responsibility is diminished.

In constructing their novels in this way, Shadbolt and Wedde allow the difficulties of a colonial past to be placed to one side. Certainly, an "official" colonial past peopled by the likes of Whitmore and Wakefield has little impact on how Pakeha see themselves. Of greater significance is the heroic male figure exemplified by the sportsman, soldier and pioneer. He provides the cornerstone of a masculinist culture that emphasises physical strength, endurance, independence and resourcefulness. Shadbolt, in his memoir, demonstrates how a pioneering past can be made to fit the ideal: "There was nothing motley, nothing inconsequential, about the muscular men who won fresh worlds from moist wilderness" (31). The heroic male is the antithesis of Wedde's portrayal of Wakefield with his "flabby pale gentleman's breast" (214) and white flannels. While Wakefield and his party are easily tricked into removing eggs from a flea-infested fowl house (194), Heberley easily accommodates himself to the new environment. He, like Fairweather and Bent in Shadbolt's novels, fulfils a heroic and masculinist role. In "Settlement as Forgetting", Turner looks at how such roles function within Pakeha culture in general. He argues that the masculinist ideal sustains an "inarticulate national identity" which "provides a sense of place that is not founded on a strong sense of history" (30). Even as historical

novels, then, the texts I am looking at sustain a construction of Pakeha identity that is based in the present.

The heroic male, central to any understanding of the national character, is combined with an emphasis on egalitarian ideals. Christine Cole Catley touches on this in her essay in King's *Pakeha*: "Most of us like to think that some sort of rough-hewn empathy, some quick stab of sympathy for a fellow human being, informs us as New Zealanders. Accepting and assessing people for what they are, and not as representatives of a particular social class, certainly is a particular or distinctive New Zealand trait" (39). *Symmes Hole*, in particular, draws on this ideal. Heberley's opposition to Wakefield arises out of a contempt for the class system he represents. He complains that an imported class structure will see "us folk ... be made thieves and poachers all over again" (234). The researcher inherits Heberley's ideals, rephrasing them in terms of the threat that McDonalds poses to the Popular Milkbar and the sense of community that it represents. Even Hugh, in *The Singing Whakapapa*, is pleased to refer to Flatt's actions against the Church Missionary Society as the "gardener's revenge" (174). He is sympathetic to Flatt's argument that "Christ had chosen fishermen for disciples, not Oxbridge graduates" (174) and positions his own history against that studied by "English-born Oxbridge-trained professors" (142). Shadbolt's novels, too, draw on the egalitarian ideal. Fairweather, in *Season of the Jew*, struggles to save the life of Hamiora, something that mystifies his Pakeha contemporaries but endears him to a late twentieth century readership sensitive to colonial wrongs. Such narratives are indicative of the "unofficial" history that dominates the national consciousness. Lyndsay Head, another contributor to King's *Pakeha*, sums it up in this way: "Reciprocity. The fair go. Equality. Egalitarianism. Foundation stones of our ideal character" (29). This reference to "reciprocity" recalls a key element of the anti-conquest narrative; the need to understand colonial intervention as a process of exchange. To the extent that this refers to economic or cultural exchange, or to the extent that it recognises native agency,

there is little difficulty. In fact, it complements a revisionist approach to history such as that of James Belich who, in *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict* (1986), rediscovers for Pakeha a history of native resistance. However, when “reciprocity” is associated with a term such as “equality”, or when it is used to imply a state of harmonious relations – as it does in the case of romantic anti-conquest – it ceases to make sense within the colonial context. Certainly there is little room for a colonial legacy of violence in a history that emphasises the “fair go”.

Something similar could be said about a history framed in childhood innocence. Hugh, in *The Singing Whakapapa*, abstracts his childhood experiences on the family farm into an understanding of pioneering history. A series of emblematic moments – the felling of a kauri, the buggy ride, being chased by bees and burning off scrub – informs his understanding of history and his relationship with the land. Furthermore, his childhood confusion at glimpsing Greta’s breast and his embarrassment at seeing her with Willis Handy in the milking shed, ensures that the past becomes a matter of “remembering innocence and how it felt” (30). This feeds into his more political assertions; the idea, for instance, that “[h]e had been born, all pale, male and unsuspecting” and that “[i]f [he] carried from birth the sins of the fathers, so did everyone else, brown and white” (143). *Symmes Hole* is also dependent on a history understood through memories of childhood. The researcher’s memory of a cookout on the beach with his father allows him access to Heberley: “he’d eaten that food himself, right there in the Sounds – shellfish, and ember-baked potatoes, and cods’-head stews cooked up on the beach in a kerosene tin” (272). This experience, described by Hardy as an “innocent meal cooked and eaten in a seductively familiar place, the pastoral littoral of any New Zealand childhood” (218), allows the researcher into Heberley’s “natural occupancy”. The reality of Heberley’s experience of first contact – his shock at discovering cannibalised remains in the bush and on the beach – is set aside. As Hardy puts it (with reference to the journal of the

historical Heberley), “the twentieth-century researcher and the nineteenth-century whaler do not seek each other out on the cannibal beach strewn with ‘Heads, Arms and Joints’” (218). Instead, they meet within an idyllic childhood moment. At the same time, the beach – the site of colonial encounter – is disassociated from a history of confusion or violence, and becomes a site of leisure. Turner, in “Settlement as Forgetting”, refers to such an understanding of the beach in more general terms relating to the construction of Pakeha identity: “That the trauma of contact with a different place and its peoples has always occurred on landing is precisely obscured by the will to conceive the common culture in terms of beach life. The development of settler culture has turned the beach into a playground” (31). As such, the difficulties of the contact zone are ignored. There is a certain irony, then, in the way that Ian Richards concludes his review of Shadbolt’s *The House of Strife*: “As summer approaches, Kiwis will be thinking of the holidays and the beach, and perhaps a novel to tuck away among the sunglasses and suntan oil. *The House of Strife* can be happily recommended”(47). In *Symmes Hole*, childhood experience combines with a construction of the beach as a site of recreation to provide, for the researcher, a “natural occupancy” free from the difficulties of official history.

Turner’s analysis of the Pakeha relationship with history is particularly useful in understanding how Hugh’s history functions in *The Singing Whakapapa*. Hugh’s childhood experiences not only colour his history and ensure a sense of its innocence but also provide the basis for his realist approach to the past. Turner refers to such an approach as “[n]ew-country realism” (“Settlement” 28), a mode of thinking that is “concerned with place as a physical experience” (28). This establishes a masculinist, and therefore restricted, understanding of identity: “[t]he cultural identity produced by physical contact with a new environment instantiates a common-sense reality that is confined to men” (Turner, “Settlement” 28). According to Turner, it alienates “[e]merging representations of the experience of women, Maori, and non-English immigrants”

(29). Looked at in this way, Hugh's perceptions of history represent a particular mode of understanding; a way of looking at history that is culturally determined. He claims that his interest is in knowledge – rather than the determination of cause or the allocation of guilt – and he insists on a separation of fact from morality: “Who blew the whistle? Who shouted ‘All change!’? Who said, ‘The facts are not enough. We must have morals!’? Who demanded that the past must become a club with which to beat the present over the head, knock it into shape, make it behave ‘correctly’?” (142). However, this does nothing to protect his history from ideology. There can, as Catherine Belsey puts it, be “no practice without theory, however much that theory is suppressed, unformulated or perceived as ‘obvious’” (4). She summarises a structuralist approach to “common sense” that understands it to be “ideologically and discursively constructed, rooted in a specific historical situation and operating in conjunction with a particular social formation” (3). This suggests that Hugh's history cannot be separated from the context in which he lives or from his position within a majority culture. The facts on which he relies to establish his history suggest, for example, that Maori were eager to sell their land and satisfied with the price paid in blankets, axes, tobacco and pipes (44). Flatt's evidence to the Select Committee, while critical of the missionaries, confirms this: “he insisted that the chiefs were anxious to sell, knew what they were doing when they sold, and felt they stood to gain by it” (171). While this ensures, for Hugh, a guiltless sense of belonging, his reliance on such thinking constitutes a denial of how history is experienced by other cultures. It makes no allowances for a Maori understanding of history that may be quite different, an understanding that, according to Turner, “conceives the past in a way that can only be dismissed in Western terms. The idea that past and present are entwined, that history progresses and regresses simultaneously, suggests to a westernised mind a society constrained by myth” (“Settlement” 36). Hugh's confidence in the “facts” implies that he is far from recognising the existence of other histories or even the ideologies that operate within his own. As such, he need not consider that Flatt's account of Maori land

sales was itself culturally determined or that Maori may have construed the transactions – either at the time or in retrospect – as something entirely different.

Difference

Issues of difference are a stumbling block in any attempt by the coloniser to establish authority. This is central to Bhabha's analysis of colonial discourse. Difference threatens to undermine the ability of the colonising power to see itself as representative of universal values. Such ideas can be related to what Turner understands, within the New Zealand context, as a need to ignore the indigenous presence. For the settler, this is required if he/she is to establish an identity in the "new" country ("Settlement" 21). A failure to "notice" the indigenous population also enables the coloniser to ignore the ideological difficulties involved in the process of colonisation. Bhabha also refers to this: "colonial domination is achieved through a process of disavowal that denies the chaos of its intervention" (111). Such issues continue to affect constructions of Pakeha identity and issues of authority today. They drive a Pakeha attempt to "forget", whether that be by displacing responsibility for colonial wrongs or by rewriting the past as anti-conquest. More specifically, Hugh's understanding of history in *The Singing Whakapapa* – representative of a "common sense" approach to the past – can be understood as a denial of historical difference. The cultural authority that it bestows is dependent on a belief that only a history based on the "facts" has any relevance. As such, Maori historical memory poses a threat to a history such as Hugh's because it asserts difference: "The intractability of indigenous people to Western designs reveals progressive or enlightened history to be a product of Western desire and a denial of the unsettling processes of encounter and exchange with others" (Turner, "Settlement" 35-36).

In *The Singing Whakapapa*, Hugh protects his possession of history by placing Maori within a history of transition and change. This, in the end, leaves

their culture redundant. At Frank Mangold's funeral, Hugh muses on the layering of history within the landscape. Maori – overtaken by loggers, Dalmatian gum-diggers, cow farmers and Hugh himself – are understood as a temporary presence: "Sometimes what the digger's long fine spear touched on proved not to be gum but stone – an adze, a mere – a reminder of the tribespeople who had once passed through the kauri forest travelling from coast to coast" (13). Maori culture exists, primarily, as a trace on the landscape. Otherwise it can be found, embodied once more in adzes and meres, amongst the paraphernalia of the homestead "mak[ing] its accommodation with time and landscape and weather" (52). If this implies that Maori culture belongs to the past, the description of Flatt's first encounter with Maori – seen as they glide past him on the river – is suggestive of their fate. Flatt is clearly impressed by such a noble image (73) but there is a sense, in the telling, that this cannot endure into the future. The canoe and its occupants are separated from reality: "A bronze old man in a cloak sat against the carved stern-post, seeming almost to be part of it, looking away into the distance as if nothing near at hand was so real to him as his image of himself" (35). The paddlers on this "death-ship" (35), with expressionless faces, finally disappear into the fading light (36). The river, flowing in one direction only, is representative of a linear approach to history that relegates them to the past. Flatt is later tempted to associate the image with "heartless blood-letting" (73), something Hugh, with his emphasis on Maori war and cannibalism – "cold and cruel, duplicitous, heartless and violent" (67) – inherits. In Hugh's mind, Maori history is, inevitably and quite justifiably, overtaken by things Pakeha. The threat of difference is overcome.

Belich's analysis of the New Zealand Wars and how they have been historicised suggests that Pakeha interpretations of the past have always been reliant on an erasure of difference. In *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*, Belich argues that a Victorian understanding of the wars was predicated on a need to preserve European authority. The

central problem for the British, who saw anything other than victory over “savages” as inconceivable, was the extent of successful Maori resistance. While the “final safety-net was to forget” (Belich 321), the historical record reveals a marked Victorian “reluctance to credit the Maori with the higher military talents: the capacity to coordinate, to think strategically, and to innovate tactically and technically” (Belich 316). The British dealt with this by providing, in their accounts, an alternative emphasis, the most effective being a focus on Maori chivalry and heroism (320). This drew attention away from Maori strategic ability, obscured British defeats, gave British accounts a false impression of objectivity and concealed the need for revision. Belich is highly critical of this emphasis on chivalry, not least because it feeds into an assimilationist ideal. He argues that the Victorian interpretation of the wars has formed the basis of “a complex social, political, and cultural phenomenon of enormous power” (310). Persisting into the present, it has become entwined in a myth of race relations:

[T]he courage and chivalry of the Maori in their hopeless struggle is said to have created an enduring esteem for them in the minds of their enemies. With the older humanitarian strand in British policy, this respect survived various trials and tribulations to form the basis of modern, model, New Zealand race relations – so much better than those of settlement colonies in Australia, America, and Africa.
(Belich 299)

Furthermore, when combined with myths of the Aryan Maori and the dying Maori, the myth of the New Zealand Wars “indicated that the Maori was both worthy and capable of assimilation into British civilization” (Belich 300). To state it differently, the manner in which the wars were historicised both ensured European authority and provided the basis for a race relations myth that denied cultural difference.

In writing the New Zealand Wars trilogy, Shadbolt must negotiate previous constructions of history and their ideological uses. In many respects his approach is revisionist, something signalled in the Author's Note to *Monday's Warriors* which acknowledges a debt to Belich. His focus, in this novel, is on Titokowaru who, according to Belich, posed "perhaps the greatest threat to European dominance in the history of New Zealand" (257). Shadbolt's emphasis on Titokowaru draws attention to a leader who, according to Belich, has been largely absent from the Pakeha historical record until now (257). The emphasis in each novel on specific military campaigns sees Shadbolt highlight, rather than obscure, Maori strategic ability. He also portrays, within the British command, attitudes that epitomise the Victorian beliefs described by Belich. Assuming that they will always be victorious against "savages", the British continually underestimate the enemy, write "decorative" accounts of battles in order to justify or downplay losses and blame Maori successes on the interference of renegades. The importance of Shadbolt's revisionism should not be underestimated; he emphasises both Maori success and the devastating effects of losses against an imperial army. Critics, when dealing with the novels, have focused primarily on this revisionism and on assessing the accuracy of Shadbolt's research. Crane, in referring to "Shadbolt's attempt to revise the 'master narrative' of the New Zealand Wars" ("Tickling" 65) and in noting his "serious attempt to understand the Maori perspective and to integrate it into his story" ("Tickling" 61) is fairly representative of the critical response. Ruth Brown, in "After Belich", is more emphatic. She takes issue with W. H. Oliver's assertion that, in *Monday's Warriors*, "the moral dice are loaded against the Pakeha" (Oliver 110) and concludes that "Shadbolt is telling the truth" (Brown 112).

Brown seems happy to accept the binaries that govern Shadbolt's treatment of Maori and Pakeha in *Monday's Warriors* and, although the novel can be understood in these terms, its operation is rather more complex. In spite of his revisionism, Shadbolt retains a central aspect of the New Zealand Wars myth;

an emphasis on Maori chivalry. In each of the novels, Maori are consistently portrayed as more chivalrous than the British forces. A typical example of this occurs in the battle which opens *Season of the Jew*. Fairweather is rescued and carried into British lines by the enemy chief who, in doing so, places his own life at risk: “‘I bring regrets,’ the Maori explained. ‘You were shot while about mercy. This was not my wish’” (13). Cultural difference becomes a matter of degree as Maori become more gentlemanly, more chivalrous and more Christian, in effect more English, than the English. While an emphasis on chivalry and old-fashioned heroics is indicative of a 1980s tendency to romanticise Maori life, it also serves the assimilationist ideal identified by Belich. Furthermore, in ensuring that Maori remain explicable to Pakeha, it removes the threat of difference. Shadbolt’s notion of a “new Pacific race in the making” (Holland 71) has the same effect. In the Holland interview he states: “The real test for race relations is intermarriage. The novelist Colin MacInnes used to say that there were only two countries in the world that had it made – Brazil and New Zealand – because of intermarriage. So I would probably stick by that, but it doesn’t happen overnight. We’re talking generations” (71). Shadbolt’s understanding of ideal “race relations” turns, then, on the erasure of genetic difference. Maori chivalry retains its place in his novels because, within the tradition that he inherits, it serves a similar purpose at the cultural level.

In each of Shadbolt’s novels, Maori are comprehensible almost entirely in English terms. What constitutes difference is simply a matter of practice, something that, in *Monday’s Warriors*, is indulged in for strategic reasons. Titokowaru advocates a return to cannibalism in order to free Maori from a legacy of Christianity and colonialism but it is clear that his warriors are uneasy about the practice. Shadbolt makes much of their difficulties after the first raid: “In the smoky dusk villagers gathered silent again. They were fewer in number; many warriors found reason to remain in their dwellings, pleading fatigue and forest fever” (145). Titokowaru, referred to in the newspapers as the “cannibal

captain" (202), refuses to partake and eventually it is concluded that "[m]an-eating [is] out of style" (215). Maori culture, in this context, is simply painted on for effect; it functions, for Maori, as a means of differentiating themselves from a colonial culture otherwise taken for granted. In other instances, Maori culture is reduced to superstition and used to comic effect. This occurs in *The House of Strife* when the Duke's priest, somewhat ineffectively, uses darts to determine the outcome of a raid (101). Not surprisingly, when there is little sense that Maori had an existence in New Zealand prior to the arrival of Europeans, such ceremonies appear to hold little significance even for Maori. Furthermore, in referring to Te Kooti as "Coates", Heke as "John" and Kawiti as "the Duke", Shadbolt ensures, for Pakeha, that key Maori figures can be understood as players within a story of romance, chivalry, friendship between enemies and revenge. There is little indication that Te Kooti, Heke or Titokowaru have a place within any other discourse. Shadbolt ensures that their stories become *his* to tell, part of his "heroic" past. Indeed, his own comments about the trilogy suggest that revisionism has become a function of ownership: "My Hone Heke ceases to be a slave of history from his first appearance in my fiction; I am setting him free as I similarly liberated Titokowaru in *Monday's Warriors* and Te Kooti in *Season of the Jew*" (Shadbolt, "Homer" 56).

Shadbolt's use of language in the trilogy is central to his handling of difference. Within the novels, few Maori words are used even in conversation between Maori. As Dennis McEldowney points out in his review of *Monday's Warriors*: "Maori is scarce even in placenames. The sham fortress which lured Von Tempsky to his death is referred to as the Beak of the Bird, never as Te Ngutu o te Manu" (110). All characters, Maori and Pakeha, speak a kind of nineteenth century literary English, highly stylised and littered with metaphor and alliteration. Although, as a result, Maori and Pakeha are virtually indistinguishable in speech, Shadbolt stands by his use of language, saying in regard to Maori: "their English was picked up from the missionaries, and ... it

would have been fairly formal” (Holland 71). The extent to which Maori conform to English conventions is apparent when Shadbolt’s use of language is compared to Wedde’s. In *Symmes Hole*, the English language is seen to undergo a radical transformation under New Zealand conditions. There is, as Mark Williams suggests, no place for formal English even among Pakeha: “New Zealand-English springs from the interactions between sailors and Maori, not from standard English” (*Leaving* 153). The language, then, is constantly shifting, accommodating itself to the meeting of two cultures. Thus, alongside Heberley’s dramatic rebirth into the new world is the possibility of negotiation and contestation, even confusion. The name “Worser”, for instance, arises out of Heberley’s misunderstanding of “tangata whata”, two of the first words addressed to him in Maori (137-38). Shadbolt’s use of language, on the other hand, suggests that little interaction or negotiation has occurred. Maori simply capitulate to an elevated notion of English speech transported from the Imperial centre.

Shadbolt’s handling of difference leads to the issue of mimicry. The “mimic man” is, essentially, the native who adopts the ways and manners of the coloniser. He is both a threat and a comfort. Bhabha describes mimicry as “one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (85). The mimic man – to the extent that he presents himself as English – erases any threat of difference and, therefore, validates the universalist assumptions on which the coloniser relies. There are elements of this in *Monday’s Warriors*. Titokowaru is initially presented as a “lean mystery of a man under a blanket at the centre of things, his face in shadow, who let lessers do the talking” (39). Even his followers keep a respectful distance. However, as Bent and the reader quickly discover, the mystery man under the blanket is, in fact, a methodist preacher. In dress he is the “English gentleman” (40): “he wore a bowler hat and dark suit and black shoes with high polish; a gold watch-chain was looped between the fob pockets of a burgundy waistcoat” (40). Gone is the mystery

and the threat of difference. Furthermore, Titokowaru's mana is established in terms that the Pakeha reader can understand; he is charismatic and in control. However the mimic man, as Bhabha emphasises, is also a threat. He becomes a “‘partial’ presence” (86) – both the same and different – and threatens the coloniser by reflecting back to him/her the ambivalence of his/her own discourse. Robert Young summarises Bhabha’s argument: “the colonizer sees a grotesquely displaced image of himself. Thus the familiar, transported to distant parts, becomes uncannily transformed, the imitation subverts the identity of that which is being represented, and the relation of power, if not altogether reversed, certainly begins to vacillate” (*White Mythologies* 147). As such, the mimic man makes apparent the contradictions and flaws within the colonising project. Shadbolt’s portrayal of Titokowaru acknowledges this difficulty. Titokowaru’s representation of an English gentleman is flawed: “The fault in the spectacle was facial. Kimball had never seen a man uglier” (40). With “his right eye shot from its socket” (40), Titokowaru’s appearance reflects the unattractive side of colonialism. Certainly, his mode of dress can be understood as a threat: “The most bitter sight of all, for colonists alive, was that of Titokowaru, warrior chief of Taranaki, a floating nightmare in his best bib and tucker, his terrible face looming under a top hat” (187). Yet as the narrative makes clear, the threat is directed at colonists. Bent’s distance from colonial society – and the fact that he is adopted by Titokowaru as a grandson – ensures that he is immune. Bent also represents, for Titokowaru, “another eye” (134), something that, metaphorically, corrects the flaw in Titokowaru’s appearance. More importantly, Bent’s disengagement from official history allows readers to distance themselves from the threat that Titokowaru represents. The reader identifies with Bent – not least because the narrative is restricted to his point-of-view – and therefore sympathises with Titokowaru. If he is a threat to colonists, all the better.

Season of the Jew works in a similar way. Te Kooti’s appropriation of Old Testament narratives threatens to hybridise colonial discourse. He turns English

authority against itself by taking the Bible and reflecting it back at the coloniser. However, in using this form of mimicry as the basis of military resistance he makes the threat more tangible than anything that Bhabha describes. In terms of the novel, the threat that Te Kooti poses to English authority becomes the source of irony, something apparent in Whitmore's response to the situation: "How were good soldiers of the Queen foxed by a Bible-banging Maori?" (319). It is also an opportunity for humour. When Fairweather first sees Te Kooti dressed as a prophet, he understands the chief to be in "fancy dress" (97) and treats it as a joke: "Coates? Kooti? Or Moses on Sinai; Joshua commanding the sun to stand still. The apparition stood luminous in a long white robe trimmed with red, hands clasped high as if in prayer, grave, tidily bearded, his hair a cascade of ringlets" (96-97). Later, when he realises the seriousness of the challenge, he reads the Bible in the hope of understanding Te Kooti's plans (177-78). If Fairweather considered himself a religious man, or even a colonist, this might indicate uncertainty or constitute a form of self-examination. But Fairweather is neither of these things and is immune to such uncertainty, as is the twentieth century reader who identifies with him. There is no threat to Fairweather's authority because he never really claims any in nineteenth century terms.

Although, like the other novels in the trilogy, *Season of the Jew* is about conflict between Maori and Pakeha, it plays on parallels between the two central combatants, Te Kooti and Fairweather. Friends with Te Kooti prior to the war, Fairweather begins to fight in earnest only after the massacre at Matawhero. He is motivated by vengeance, something that, as Herrick points out, makes him more like Te Kooti: "In what way, then, if you forgive my asking, will you now differ from Kooti?" (228). Similarly, in the final section of the novel, headed "Fact and further", Te Kooti and Fairweather are drawn together as elderly men and once again find common ground: "Much as men mortally enfeebled, survivors of a long voyage with an elusive landfall at last seen, they sighed and toppled into each other's arms" (383). The novel ends with an admission, on both sides, that

the world has left them perplexed (384). Shadbolt, in providing a tidy ending to his novel, dissolves the conflict between Te Kooti and Fairweather and suggests that, underneath it all, there is little difference between them. Such an emphasis on balance works in conjunction with other strategies to tidy up a difficult history and protect Pakeha complacency. Thus, in spite of the fact that the novels are meticulously researched, Shadbolt refrains from naming specific localities. Ken Arvidson comments on Shadbolt's refusal to mention the Waikato river by name: "That Shadbolt suppresses the word in this novel (and in the other novels of this historical trilogy) is presumably a strategic decision taken to protect his novels as far as possible from the pressure of having to explore the heavy political implications the word bears to the present day" (119). While Shadbolt encourages Pakeha to sympathise with nineteenth century Maori, he is not willing to risk such sympathy being clouded by present day protests or land disputes. Past and present must remain separate in order that Pakeha readers can sustain their disengagement from official colonial history. With Shadbolt taking such care with his history it is not surprising that, in 1998, *Season of the Jew* was voted "favourite New Zealand book" by *Listener* readers ("You Said It '98" 22). It makes history easier to cope with.

All of the novels I am looking at ensure that if colonial history cannot be ignored, any threat that it represents to Pakeha is minimised. Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt rewrite the past in accordance with the needs of the present. Clearly, in a late twentieth century climate, this requires an acknowledgement of colonial wrongs, something that allows the texts to be understood as revisionist. Even so, the Pakeha reader is protected. Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt employ some old strategies; in particular, elements of the anti-conquest narrative identified by Pratt. They also ensure that the central European protagonists, with whom the reader identifies, are disengaged from the official history of colonisation where, it seems, all the fault lies. Given that these texts authorise a sense of belonging for the Pakeha reader, I want to look further into issues of uncertainty and ambivalence.

Bhabha's examination of hybridity and ambivalence at the colonial moment provides the inspiration, although the texts I am looking at – written in the late twentieth century and employing strategies relevant to that time – function very differently. With the exception of Stead's novel, there is no real acknowledgement of hybridity at the colonial moment; hardly surprising when Heberley and Fairweather, in particular, so clearly represent late twentieth century values. In the following chapter my interest, then, is in how today's uncertainties unsettle our fictional colonial histories, something that also involves looking at the effects of ignoring difference.

Chapter 3: Ambivalence

Ambivalence in Theory

Ambivalence is central to Bhabha's analysis of colonial authority at the moment of contact. Although, as Young points out, Bhabha is reluctant to combine each of his conceptual schemes – fetishism, mimicry, hybridisation and paranoia – into a coherent theory of colonial discourse, “ambivalence remains a constant reference” (*White Mythologies* 147). For Bhabha, ambivalence arises out of inherent contradictions within the colonial project; what he refers to as the “agonistic uncertainty contained in the incompatibility of empire and nation” (Bhabha 96). He sees, within the documents of nineteenth century colonialism, a “doubling of democracy as vigorous despotism” (97) and suggests that the very existence of the colony undermines Western discourses of liberty. Such contradictions and uncertainties are made apparent within the colonial context. They are, as Bhabha puts it, the result of “the ambivalent, deferred address of colonialist governance” (95). Within such a context, the realities of cultural and historical difference threaten to undermine the authority of a colonial discourse reliant on an assumption of universality; hence the threat of hybridity. To look at it in another way, the coloniser's contradictory or multiple beliefs become apparent in the face of difference and, as a result, colonial discourse doubles or splits. Bhabha draws on psychoanalysis to describe how this happens: “the existence of two contradictory knowledges (multiple beliefs) splits the ego (or the discourse) into two psychical attitudes, and forms of knowledge, towards the external world. The first of these takes reality into consideration while the second replaces it with a product of desire” (115). Herein lies the threat of the mimic man who, in representing the double vision of the coloniser, “disclos[es] the ambivalence of colonial discourse [and] disrupts its authority” (88). Within the colonial context, then, the coloniser's discourse falters under the weight of its own anxieties, something that threatens to expose “the awkward, ambivalent,

unwelcome truth of empire's lie" (138).

It is easy to look back at the colonial moment and identify difficulty. Ross Gibson, analysing photographic portraits of early North Queensland colonists, identifies among those photographed a "communal neurosis" (44). He refers to the "spiritual strain" (44) that shows on the faces of those who have seen too much violence and struggled too long on the land. Such images record the "fright or anguish" (44), the "[d]eep disquiet" (45) amongst "white people who perceived themselves to be suspended in savagery" (44). Gibson, then, identifies from a late twentieth century perspective an unease that stems from the faltering of absolutes in the face of colonial reality: "Europeans' definitions and presumptions were often perturbed by the knowledge that they were interlopers and that there was much that they had yet to categorise and comprehend" (45). Such difficulties are combined with an inability to acknowledge difference: "citizens throughout Australia were deciding, usually more unconsciously than consciously, that whatever was not European was not to be acknowledged" (53). Any evidence of difference – the fact, for example, that an Aboriginal man, before hanging, turns his eyes not to heaven but to the land – results in a "quiet befuddlement" (53); something Gibson identifies in the memoirs of a North Queensland policeman. More often than not, however, North Queensland communities lived within a "mythological vacuum" (53). If difference is to be ignored, there can be no plausible stories to tell.

In "A History Lesson", Stephen Turner looks at Cook's uncertain response to the killing of four Maori in Poverty Bay as a violent and ambivalent moment of encounter. Cook is surprised by Maori behaviour, struggles to justify his actions and is left wrestling with his conscience (89). That Turner understands this in terms of Cook's inability to conceive of cultural difference, places the issue of difference at the heart of cross-cultural encounter. European certainties are undermined when the coloniser is confronted with the realities of

the colonial context and the violence that arises out of an encounter with difference. To put it another way, uncertainty becomes a symptom of the coloniser's inability to comprehend the existence of another fully functioning set of social relations: "Cook himself had little notion that the peoples he encountered might have been acting in a wholly different but internally coherent way" (Turner, "History Lesson" 90). Cook's actions and his attempts to justify them constitute, for Turner, an emblematic moment. Breaking with a contemporary demand for purity of origins, he refuses to look to the past as a source of clarity. Rather, his analysis focuses on misunderstanding and uncertainty. This opens the way for a conception of the past that is more to do with a shared or entangled history than the appropriation or obliteration of indigenous innocence.

In *White Mythologies* Young points to some difficulties in Bhabha's approach that may be equally applicable to the work of Gibson and Turner. Young is interested in the question of native resistance and the extent to which Bhabha's analysis allows for this: "Is Bhabha describing a forgotten moment of historical resistance, or does that resistance remain inarticulate until the interpreter comes a hundred and seventy years later to 'read between the lines' and rewrite history?" (149). This leads to similar questions about the nature of ambivalence: "how does the equivocality of colonial discourse emerge, and when – at the time of its enunciation or with the present day historian or interpreter?" (Young, *White Mythologies* 152). On this matter, Young can draw no firm conclusion from Bhabha's analysis but any possibility that native resistance or colonial ambivalence occurs only in the mind of the critic raises questions about the relevance of Bhabha's theory. Presumably if, in the historical moment, "seditionary undoings ... remain unconscious for both colonizer and colonized" (Young 152), Bhabha's articulation of them in the present means little. While Turner and Gibson do not deal directly with issues of native resistance, questions about the location of ambivalence remain applicable. When, for example, Turner

identifies ambivalence in Cook's journal, what does this change? Presumably Cook is aware of his uncertainty but, without any conception of cultural difference, he is not in a position to identify its source. Turner, like Gibson I suspect, is articulating an ambivalence that existed at the colonial moment but could not be understood or acted upon at that time. Turner, Gibson and Bhabha are reinterpreting the past.

This issue is complicated by the fact that Turner's focus is, primarily, on the present. His "history lesson" is a means of accounting for current Pakeha difficulties. When he writes of Cook's uncertain response to cultural conflict, to his inability to conceive of difference and his reliance on a system of thought based on the individual, he is addressing not only the past, but current issues of Pakeha belonging and identity. It is possible, then, that the ambivalences he identifies at the colonial moment arise out of his reading of the present. Given the complexities of today's cultural environment – a legacy of Pakeha guilt, the remnant of a powerful race relations myth and contemporary political imperatives – to what extent is Turner subject to the ambivalences he describes? Certainly these are issues that affect any attempt to examine the past and are only more apparent in Turner because he does address the issue of historical inheritance. Similar difficulties affect the novels of Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt and my analysis of them. Given that the novels are aimed at a contemporary readership, current demands and ambivalences will affect how they are written and understood. The result is an interweaving of past and present ambivalences which cannot, I think, be separated.

Bearing in mind such difficulties, I want to look at how ambivalence complicates contemporary Pakeha approaches to colonial history. As I have argued, such approaches can work to validate a Pakeha presence, something that brings into play issues of cultural authority. Given that the novels I am looking at respond to contemporary Pakeha demands, my interest is in the extent to which

any authority they confer is uncertain. Again, with the novels focusing on history, past and present ambivalence is an issue. If, as Bhabha argues, the colonial moment is ambivalent and the discourse of the coloniser split, what happens when Pakeha look back to the past and reinvent colonial beginnings? First, I want to look at the extent to which these novels acknowledge an ambivalent history. How is such a historical inheritance negotiated for contemporary Pakeha readers?

Past and Present Ambivalence

Of the five novels I am looking at, Stead's most clearly describes the colonial moment as ambivalent. His portrayal of early missionary life in New Zealand emphasises, through the experiences of Flatt and Brown, the uncertainties of the colonial project. Because Stead's narrative links such uncertainty with an exposure to cultural difference, a parallel can be drawn with the sort of ambivalence that Bhabha describes. Instances of multiple belief, cross-cultural misunderstanding and a sense among the missionaries that they have become complicit in inter-tribal war are indicative of hybridised authority. The uncertainties of the colonial moment are also apparent in Brown's "agitation of ... mind and heart" (90) when confronted with the body of Tarore and in Flatt's growing sense of puzzlement, "a sense that his mind had been stretched beyond anything his education and his religion had prepared it for, and so beyond his ability to understand" (128). However, Hugh's history represents a progression away from such difficulties. Ambivalent origins, while acknowledged, belong to the past. Even within the lifetimes of Flatt and Brown the Christian message begins to infiltrate Maori thinking and behaviour. Certainly by the 1990s, when Maori culture and history have been absorbed into Hugh's Eurocentric history of progress, he can be confident of a cultural authority derived primarily from Europe.

Hugh's understanding of history represents one way that ambivalence at the colonial moment can be dealt with. This assumes, however, a Pakeha engagement with history. It may be more realistic to say that, if the past is acknowledged at all, its ambivalences are not. In "Settlement as Forgetting" Turner returns to his account of Cook's encounter with Maori in Poverty Bay: "Whites happily remember Cook, perhaps even the events at Taurangi-nui, but not his worries about the impact of encounter" (31). For Turner, it is this sort of complacency that allows Pakeha to understand the beach, not as a site of contact, but as a site of leisure. This, he argues, is difficult to sustain. Forgotten histories remain to haunt our understanding of the present: "the desire of settlement pushes initial anxieties of contact underground, creating an interior space, or cultural unconscious. Thus the dreamscape of white culture at the beach is disturbed by buried history" ("Settlement" 31). Whether the difficulties of the past go unacknowledged or are tidied away into a progressive history such as Hugh's, difficulties remain beneath the surface.

Not surprisingly, then, Hugh's understanding of the past is disturbed by another history. The character of Tarore is central to this. As a representative of cultural difference, her presence is contained within the narrative. She is known only through the eyes of Brown and Flatt and becomes, primarily, an object of desire: "there had always been about her, even while she was still a child, before the disturbance of young womanhood came suddenly upon her, something Brown responded to almost in spite of himself" (89-90). However, when Jean-Anne and Hugh make the surprising discovery that Tarore's grave had been rededicated by the Maori Queen in 1977, she escapes from Hugh's history into the Maori history that his narrative denies: "Flatt had vanished into the dustiest corners of the Pakeha record, and his grave was lost; Tarore has survived in the word-of-mouth which was Maori history, and here her grave was restored" (273). Her grave becomes a marker of another history that Hugh ignores because it threatens the relevance of his own. As such, Tarore represents a fissure in

Hugh's narrative that threatens to let Maori history come flooding in. Hugh's history, then, is in danger of being hybridised. Here is the threat that Turner identifies in the "tenacious historical memory and insistent presence of Maori" ("Settlement" 22).

Tarore also complicates Hugh's understanding of culture. At the colonial moment she is, in Bhabha's terms, an interstitial figure. Distinguished by her Christian piety, she is cut adrift from Maori culture but remains unassimilated into Pakeha culture. Her interstitial status is most apparent when Brown and Tarore's father, Ngakuku, discuss the fate of her soul; whether it will go to Heaven or to Reinga. Ngakuku's concerns are based on an awareness of her affair with Flatt. Brown, believing that "[s]he had received the Christian message" (91) and unaware of the nature of her relationship with Flatt, can only reiterate his belief that she will go to Heaven, thus ruling out Reinga. In this way, the colonial moment becomes quite literally, a site of negotiation. More importantly, the location of Tarore's grave – "past both cemeteries, Maori and Pakeha" (272) – suggests that she retains her interstitial status within Hugh's present. Flatt's grave cannot be located at all. Hugh and Jean-Anne decide that the gravestone "must long since have gone underground to join him in anonymity" (271). Flatt's own interstitial status at the colonial moment, his own uncertainties and negotiations, are forgotten. If his life in New Zealand demonstrates the difficulties of transporting European ideologies into the colonial context, such difficulties are not carried into the present. The suggestion is that, in the end, it is only Maori culture that loses its claims to authenticity.

While Hugh acknowledges ambivalence at the colonial moment, the researcher in *Symmes Hole* adopts a very different approach. In attempting to "get back" to Heberley, he looks to the colonial past as a source of innocence, something that – through Heberley's assimilation into Maori society – draws on indigeneity. Furthermore, Heberley's dramatic moment of rebirth on the beach –

his exhalation of a European past and inhalation of a “new world” (219) – leaves little room for ambivalence or uncertainty. However, the researcher’s attempt to claim Heberley as a point of origin quickly becomes problematic. Given the nature of contemporary society, a link back to Heberley cannot be sustained. Heberley’s contempt for Wakefieldian colonisation grows, in the mind of the researcher, into an opposition to American cultural imperialism. This is exemplified, in the novel, by the McDonalds fast food chain, a “literally nowhere robot-dunny eatery” (260). Wakefield and McDonald’s are equated in the sense that they both represent an imported culture that threatens a meaningful sense of “location”. They also work against an egalitarian ideal which is, for Heberley, represented by Maori society and the whalers who join it and, for the researcher, by the Popular Milkbar. And yet, when looked at in terms of colonial history, the researcher’s defence of the Milkbar is contradictory. It sees him defending the legacy of Wakefield. Unable to sustain his place within a failed and subversive history, he enters mainstream Pakeha history. To look at it another way, the researcher mistakes the Milkbar for something indigenous. As Cynthia Brophy argues, he is “unable to ‘see’ the inauthenticity of the Milkbar; he tries desperately to construct a point of origin where none exists” (70). In light of this, the researcher’s contempt for the place-names commemorating key figures of colonial history looks like an attempt to hide the contradiction, to deny his position within the dominant culture.

The nature of Heberley’s experiences in New Zealand, when interpreted by the researcher, are also a source of difficulty. The researcher’s attempt to construct Heberley as an innocent point of origin ignores a basic contradiction. While Heberley allows colonialism to be rewritten as an innocent desire for a house, a wife and pigeon pie, and while he represents an acquired indigeneity gained through an assimilation into Maori society, he participates in the slaughter of whales that, throughout the novel, embody an ultimate indigeneity. In this sense, Heberley represents a point where a yearning for indigeneity meets the

colonial reality of commercial exploitation and violence. The novel, then, begins to work against itself. What makes Heberley's position particularly difficult, however, is the fact that on the *Caroline*, he participates in a massacre of Maori. Shots are fired from the ship, boats are lowered and wounded Maori floating in the water are lanced: "As the boat drifts untrimmed among the floating men [the mate, Jeffries] raises the twelve foot weapon with the poise of trained instinct and drives the double-edged blade between the tongue and teeth of a face upturned from the bloody scum" (67). At dusk sharks enter the bay to devour the corpses. The similarity between this and the slaughter of whales – which sees lances driven into spout-holes as pennants (62) – highlights the difficulty of Heberley's position. He is both the representative of indigeneity and a player in its destruction.

Shadbolt, including no late twentieth century mediating figure within his novels, has a different, although no less complicated, relationship with the fictionalised histories he constructs. In terms of ambivalence he does not so much acknowledge an ambivalent past as inherit it. Even to the extent that they are revisionist, the novels of his New Zealand Wars trilogy are inseparable from previous constructions of history. These constructions are, according to Belich, reliant on assumptions of European superiority and on a refusal to look beyond an assimilationist ideal. They are anxious histories given to contradiction; Belich notes, for example, their stress on both Maori chivalry and Maori "atrocities" (320). There is a degree of similarity, then, between such histories and the colonising discourse that Bhabha describes. Here he looks at the contradictory nature of stereotype: "The black is both savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants (the bearer of food); he is the embodiment of rampant sexuality and yet innocent as a child; he is mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator of social forces" (82). Similar contradictions can be identified in Shadbolt's treatment of Te Kooti in *Season of the Jew*. Te Kooti is both the

child keen to learn the ways of European war, commerce and law, and the insane killer driven by revenge. He is the mystic who recognises the face of Fairweather from his future (19) and the outlaw posing as prophet. He is capable of extraordinary politeness – in Auckland “Coates took [Fairweather’s] elbow to steer him past patches of mud, puddles of rain, and parading whores” (18) – and extreme acts of barbarity. While such contradictions may be understood in the context of Coates’ transformation into Te Kooti (of which few details are narrated), when combined with an inconsistent treatment by the implied author and narrator, they become more difficult to justify. On the one hand, the novel is sympathetic to Te Kooti’s cause. The impression gained from the novel is that Te Kooti has been treated unjustly and that his claims, on return from the Chatham Islands, are reasonable: “They wanted no quarrel with colonists. They wished only their land back, their homes” (86). And yet, in the “Fact and Further” section – written by the narrator from the point-of-view of the present – Te Kooti is roundly condemned: “He continued to win followers and raid settlements, leaving many more Maoris dead in the attempt to remodel his race much as Cambodians of the Khmer Rouge were to winnow their own people in the late 20th century” (380). As Calder argues, this is a “remarkably excessive judgement – as rash and one-eyed as any of the voices of colonial outrage we’ve heard earlier” (Review of *Season of the Jew* 109). In fulfilling all of the stereotypes, Te Kooti as a historical figure loses all credibility. The contradictions apparent in his treatment are suggestive of what Bhabha might call “multiple belief” (74), something Shadbolt inherits from previous constructions of the past.

The issue of ambivalence is complicated by the fact that the novels I am looking at have to function within a contemporary context. While any history of the contact zone must negotiate the ambivalences of the past, the distance between past and present opens the door for additional difficulty. Thomas’s account, in *Cook’s Sites*, of his visit to Astronomer’s Point illustrates this. The site, characterised by the stumps of trees felled by Forster on Cook’s visit, takes

on new meanings within the present:

Forster supposed that the cleared area would degenerate again into chaos, but the disorder that strikes us now is not a primeval condition but the upshot of contact. It figures not as a marker of a lack of civilisation, but as historical evidence for the beginnings of civilisation, as an organic monument to first efforts to deforest this area. (20)

Through time the site becomes ambivalent because, while Forster saw his work as the mark of progress, the felling of trees today is more likely understood as vandalism. Similarly, the colonial moment, as it is understood by the coloniser who lives it, is irretrievable today. Old myths need to be negotiated and new ones, more applicable to the present, are needed to replace them. While the coloniser within the contact zone may, as Bhabha argues, attempt to deny the dislocating effects of his/her intervention, a late twentieth century need for colonial wrongs to be acknowledged requires that the early colonial past be refashioned. As such, the novels I am looking at respond to a new context, new needs and are affected by new ambivalences.

Innocence and the Ambivalent Anti-Conquest

Much of this ambivalence arises out of the contradictory demands of a contemporary readership. To put it simply, the novels cater to a particular Pakeha readership that expects innocence from a history that acknowledges colonial injustice. Certainly the novels I am looking at do little to challenge Pakeha complacency. In Stead's novel, Hugh's approach to the past – in particular, his separation of history and morality – can be read as a response to increased Pakeha unease. *Monday's Warriors*, functioning within a similar climate, works very differently in that it relies on an absolute distinction between Pakeha guilt

and Maori innocence. While it tells the story of one monolithic culture overtaking the other, the character of Bent – with whom the reader is encouraged to identify – ensures a “way out” for the reader. In this sense, it works within the binaries of guilt and innocence identified by Lamb in “Problems of Originality”. Wedde’s novel, too, purports to offer an escape from a difficult history. While the English characters in the novel are portrayed as arrogant fools incapable of bridging the gap between themselves and a savage Maori population, Heberley moves across the divide. He offers the researcher and the Pakeha reader an innocent or “natural” colonisation. This is dependent on Heberley’s emphasis on location; or more specifically, his ability to live within the parameters established by the Pacific environment. It also means assimilating himself into Maori society.

A Pakeha desire for a guiltless history or, at least, a history that poses no threat to complacency ensures that the narrative of anti-conquest retains its usefulness at the end of the twentieth century. However, such narratives carry their own ambivalence. As Pratt points out in relation to eighteenth-century scientific writing, the narrative of anti-conquest is predicated on guilt: “In the literature of the imperial frontier, the conspicuous innocence of the naturalist, I would suggest, acquires meaning in relation to an assumed guilt of conquest, a guilt the naturalist figure eternally tries to escape, and eternally invokes, if only to distance himself from it once again” (57). The naturalist understands him/herself as an observer standing apart from the processes of colonial domination. And yet, in attempting to catalogue all known species of flora and fauna into a “totalizing order of European making” (Pratt 38), the naturalist imposes another sort of domination. Guilt is merely displaced. Not surprisingly, then, contradictions within a late twentieth century New Zealand context ensure that the narrative of anti-conquest remains flawed. Heberley, as he is understood by the researcher in *Symmes Hole*, is comparable to Pratt’s eighteenth-century naturalist in that he works to establish an innocent relationship with the environment. Such an

attempt to rewrite colonial domination in passive terms has limited success. Difficulties are not resolved; they are simply obscured.

While Heberley allows colonialism to be rewritten in more desirable terms, his role as a whaler ensures that colonial violence reappears in a different form. The problem is exacerbated, for the researcher, by a dramatic change in attitude towards whaling, something that occurs within his own lifetime. He wonders at this when a whale and her calf are sighted in Oriental Bay: “He was thinking how, no more than maybe twenty years ago? – when I was, fifteen? ... the harbour would have quickly filled with boats bent on sporting massacre” (112). While the nineteenth-century Heberley would, presumably, have little difficulty with this, the novel acknowledges that, within a 1980s context, the whale is almost sacred: “the crowd had a proprietary air ... a man in a wetsuit swam out like an emissary toward the whale and her calf” (112-13). Even so, the researcher’s interest in Heberley is due to his being a whaler; it is old whalers that he approaches at the end of the novel in the hope of establishing a link back to Heberley. The contradiction reappears, also, in the researcher’s attitude to Mocha Dick. It is difficult to accommodate the fact that, for him, both Heberley and the legendary whale are heroes of the same cause. Whaler and whale fight, apparently, for the same egalitarian ideals: “Mocha Dick, the White Knight, the Avenger ... lone guerrilla defender of his peaceful folk” (155). Mocha Dick will bite through the corporate grid over the Pacific (157) just as Heberley will rally against the exploitative nature of Wakefieldian colonisation. Given the researcher’s contradictory approach to whales and whaling, it is not surprising that he is unable to engage with the whale sighted in Oriental Bay. His wife berates him for not looking at it: “come the day when there’s a *real live whale*, I mean, actually a, actually real live mother whale and a baby, all you can do is pump out more shit, give us another lecture” (113). The researcher can only relate to the whale as an idea. In order that the contradictions be contained, whales and whaling can have no existence beyond the texts that describe them.

The researcher's madness, understood as a desire to stand apart from society, to "fail", is one way to deal with the contradictions. As Wedde himself puts it in the Dowling interview, "He came to life – he rebelled! He had to be almost mad" (168).

In *The Singing Whakapapa*, Hugh's narrative of anti-conquest is also problematic. If Flatt's relationship with Tarore is read as an attempt to negotiate an innocent sense of belonging via indigeneity, it is deeply flawed. Even to the extent that the relationship rewrites the coloniser's intervention in romantic terms, difficulties remain. Flatt, as a catechist among the missionaries, abuses his position. What makes things worse is that Tarore could be as young as twelve. Hugh protests – "'aged 12 years'? – more likely fifteen" (272) – but this and stories of Flatt's visit to her grave in old age, presumably an attempt to suggest that his feelings for her were genuine, fail to contain the sense that Tarore is a victim of European hypocrisy. The circumstances of her death contribute to the difficulty. Her murder is presented, in the novel, as an act of Maori barbarity, part of a bloody intertribal war: "Tarore, her young heart gone, burned to the glory of Te Whiro, the back of her skull taken off, to be displayed, proof of success, of a kill ..." (90). However, had she not been in Flatt's tent when the attack came she would have escaped the attack. Her murder, then, can be read as an act of colonial violence reemerging through the narrative of anti-conquest. Certainly, Flatt cannot be cleared of responsibility. Tarore's death sees the romantic narrative end in a way that is typical of anti-conquest: "outcomes seem to be roughly the same: the lovers are separated, the European is reabsorbed by Europe, and the non-European dies an early death" (Pratt 97). Tarore's death releases Flatt from a morally difficult situation. It also ensures that he is free to marry a woman of European descent, without which Hugh's "singing whakapapa" – the carrier of a European cultural heritage – would never get underway.

The House of Strife works a little differently. Although Shadbolt's novels are less politically engaged than those of Stead or Wedde, in casting Wildblood as a writer of New Zealand fictions he deals with some difficult issues. Wildblood writes about New Zealand long before he even sets foot on Blackguard Beach. Therefore, in telling the story of Wildblood's time in New Zealand, Shadbolt deals with what happens when European preconceptions, based on universalist assumptions, encounter colonial realities. That things measure up reasonably well is not surprising given that Wildblood's novels, written by his alter-ego Youngman, have already found their way to New Zealand and influenced Maori self-perception. As such, Youngman's anti-conquest is particularly successful. He is able to take possession of New Zealand by understanding it, almost solely, in his own terms and casting himself in a heroic role. Furthermore, in reciting his novels to Heke – in the form of a whakapapa or an oral mythological narrative – he “proves” his identity and gains access to Maori society. And yet the stories are stolen, not only from Dinwiddie but, in an indirect way, from Heke himself, with whom Dinwiddie had an acquaintance when in New Zealand. This is the lie at the heart of his anti-conquest, made apparent in the fact that it involves passing himself off, to Heke, as someone he is not. Furthermore, at the end of the novel when Dinwiddie, sent by Heke, pursues Wildblood as a harbinger of death he is forced to admit the lie: “I stole Dinwiddie's stolen story as others have mine” (293). He concedes, too, that his memoir is “only on loan” (293). To the extent that the stories constituting his memoir belong to anyone, they are Heke's: “this is not George's tale. Not Cyprian's, Despard's, or for that matter mine. It begins, though it may not end, with John Heke” (246). In this sense, Wildblood's texts are hybridised. While his novels are initially successful in both constructing an indigenous society and then gaining him access to it, their authority is, in the end, undermined. It is reclaimed by Heke.

Shadbolt, like Wedde in regard to whaling, has to deal with changing politics. However, while Wedde lets the contradictions stand – he does not

attempt to explain the researcher's stance towards whaling – Shadbolt attempts to combine, in *Season of the Jew*, nineteenth and twentieth century sensibilities. He attempts to smooth out the contradictions by incorporating them into the narrative. Thus Fairweather, who bears the brunt of the mix in sensibilities, struggles with issues of identity. He is, as Herrick puts it, a “complicated fellow” (155). The fact that he must be both the heroic soldier in a bloody colonial war and, for the benefit of a late twentieth century Pakeha readership, a sympathiser to the Maori cause is dealt with in the mode of epic romance. On returning from the battle of the Ruakituri, for example, Fairweather becomes mysteriously ill: “A giddy fit grew with first sight of the port; herald of perhaps postponed fever. When he set foot in his dwelling the ground shifted underfoot and delirium began” (161). Meriana understands it as an illness of the mind. Certainly Fairweather is struggling with an inner conflict: “He found himself shivering in the sunlight; he trusted his fitful aches were the residue of fever. He felt need to make sense of himself, and it seemed he still could not” (167). Other issues, such as Fairweather's cultural identity are dealt with in a similar way. He freely admits his confusion, something expressed in the language of binaries: “‘One minute a colonist, the next I am Maori,’ Fairweather complained. ‘I have small chance to feel whole.’” (326). Whether this sort of confession makes Fairweather a convincing character or not, the difficulties remain.

The fact that Shadbolt's novels do not include late twentieth century characters means that he can, unlike Stead and Wedde, ignore any relationship between past and present. With *Monday's Warriors*, for example, Pakeha readers can identify with the focal character and can condemn imperial ideologies and any agent of colonialism within the novel, without examining the impact of such views on the present. That is, the novel allows Pakeha readers to condemn the very things that have established their cultural dominance and material wealth in New Zealand. However, establishing a continuity between the past and a late twentieth century present does provide some difficulties in *Season of the Jew*.

Certainly, it is one way to account for the contradictory treatment of Te Kooti. The reader, while invited to sympathise with Te Kooti and his struggle through much of the novel can, after reading the “Fact and Further” section, condemn him as a monster. Any threat that his legacy poses to the status quo is defused.

Wedde’s Handling of Ambivalence

In order to assess the significance of this ambivalence it is necessary to examine how these novels function within broader debates. Each novel both reflects, and contributes to, a contemporary climate of thought. Stead and Wedde, to a greater extent than Shadbolt, are active critics and it is difficult to read either their criticism or their novels without thinking of how each relates to the other. To what extent, then, does their criticism contribute to, or resolve, the ambivalence of the novels?

An examination of Wedde’s criticism suggests that his political outlook corresponds to that of the researcher in *Symmes Hole*. His stance is always counter-cultural, always suspicious of the official line and sympathetic to the underdog. As Mark Williams puts it, a “determination to stand against official culture, to champion the subversive and the marginal against the powerful and the oppressive, stands at the heart of Wedde’s concern as a writer” (*Leaving* 142). The researcher, by understanding Heberley as the source of a counter-history, takes a similar stance. In fact, Wedde admits his identification with the researcher: “What happened to the central character, getting lost in an obsession, happened to me to a degree – a breakdown of that needed space between me and the pronoun. So some sections do turn into an interior monologue, yes” (Dowling, “Craft Interview” 168). Furthermore, when the researcher refers to European intervention in the Pacific – whaling, Wilkes, Wakefield and McDonalds – as a corporate “grid” (153, 157, 166), his words echo those of Wedde. In this extract from *How to be Nowhere*, Wedde is referring to the

commercial ventures of Charles Wilkes, (among others): “these are among many vital interstices on an historical grid: I can’t think of cultural history ‘here’ without seeing that grid laid out upon a map of the world which has the Pacific in the middle” (30). It is not surprising, then, that the researcher and Wedde have similar views on the notion of a “Pacific paradise”; they both see it as a European idea imposed on the region (Wedde, *How to be Nowhere* 245). There is also a correlation between the researcher’s emphasis on “location” and Wedde’s notions of “locating” language; the central theme of his introduction to the *Penguin*. However, in spite of such similarities, Wedde fails to fully endorse the researcher’s position at the end of the novel. He allows the researcher some solace in his meetings with old whalers by providing him with an assurance that the “Worser kind of line” (322), the failures, have survived into the present. And yet the final sentence of the novel, describing the man whom the researcher mistakes for Heberley, is ambivalent: “In the dim room the old man’s big skull has ghosted back to a bony yellow mask. His long jaw is held up by a secret grin. One stroke-smitten eyelid hangs in a perpetual wink” (322). Read one way this is indicative of irony; the man is simply telling the researcher what he wants to hear. This would suggest, in turn, that it is not so easy to pick and choose your history or to draw from the chaos of the past a single strand of clarity. Certainly, towards the end of the novel, the researcher experiences some doubts about his quest: “Maybe nothing’s clear, finally. Sometimes a part of you says, enough. This *endless* hunt for meanings, just another kind of greed” (308). However, such doubts, experienced on the edge of sleep, are countered with a dream about the mauri in the shape of a whale. Equally, the wink described in the final sentence of the novel could be that of a co-conspirator, a fellow “failure”. Wedde provides no confirmation.

It is also difficult to know how seriously we are to take the researcher’s reunion with Sashay in the final section of the novel. Are we really to believe, as Brophy puts it, that “[a]ll the angst is resolved in a flood of sunshine and sex”

(72)? It seems that Wedde, in order to provide some sort of resolution, resorts to romance. In a manner recalling the operation of romantic anti-conquest, the researcher's reunion with Sashay glosses over the issues of history and identity that the novel sets out to explore. Sashay, who advises the researcher to live in the present (313), provides an escape from history. Relaxed and at home in the world, her association with the sea recalls the ease with which whales inhabit their ocean environment: "in she sashays, your friend Sashay, with her careless laugh and her careful eyes; and you just lay your poor tired head down there, she smells like the sea, she smells like the flood-tide she came in on – all the way from the wide horizon" (279). In this sense, she represents an alternative form of indigeneity, an opportunity to be "reborn" (311). However, as is the case with anti-conquest, difficulties re-emerge within the narrative in a new form. Sashay must fulfil the role of both lover and mother. She calls him "child" (307) and becomes, primarily, a source of comfort: "and try once to say you're sorry for what you don't know, she'll just lay one long finger on your lips, sshhh" (279). She fulfils the researcher's yearning for maternal protection, for belonging and for "home", thus allowing him to overcome his anxiety and paranoia. Brophy is critical of such treatment of women in the novel, arguing that they are "marginalized as mother healers, drug gurus [and] sexy sadists" (70). Sashay is victim to the "desperation of putting it all in place at the end, laying the ghosts to rest" (72). This, within a novel that "perpetuates patriarchal archetypes" (70), goes some way towards accounting for the difficulties of Sashay's characterisation.

Brophy's look at the role of women in the novel is part of a broader analysis of Wedde's relationship with postmodernism. While she acknowledges his utilisation of postmodern theory, fragmented histories and multiple discourses within the novel (63), she argues that, on the whole, it is a modernist work. Driven by a "postcolonial nationalism" (70), reliant on the notion that authenticity can be gained from the past and focused on a quest for "definition in

terms of 'self'" (64), it is inconsistent with postmodernism. According to Brophy, women in the novel function as a means of validating male self-definition which, in turn, provides closure: "Revision of master narrative yields, after all, another 'master' narrative" (71). Mark Williams, noting Wedde's nostalgia, sentimentalism and abhorrence of mass popular culture (*Leaving* 142) also sees the novel as modernist. It is, he says, a "modernist novel about postmodernist culture" (*Leaving* 161). This, however, goes only some way towards resolving the difficulties with the novel's conclusion. While Brophy sees it as "an anti-postmodern ending" (72), Williams' notion of modernism is more inclusive. It can, apparently, tolerate uncertainty: "Wedde's writing is an enormously fluent and inclusive instrument. It embraces contradictions. The affirmations it offers are at best muted and qualified" (Williams 155). It may be more accurate to describe the novel as "late modernist",⁹ to say that while it strives for self-definition and closure, it finds postmodernist notions of fragmentation and self-ironisation difficult to ignore. The novel, then, steps back from closure in its final sentence. Another way of looking at the issue is to say that Wedde, whose outlook and ideas seem so similar to the researcher's, is honest enough to acknowledge the difficulties and contradictions that his approach to the past produces. This accounts for the ambivalent ending to the novel, the confused role of Sashay and the researcher's contradictory attitudes towards whales and the indigeneity that they share with Heberley. It also accounts for the researcher's problematic relationship with mainstream Pakeha culture. Within Wedde's novel, then, the ambivalences inherent in any attempt to rewrite Pakeha cultural origins as indigenous are allowed to stand.

Stead's Politics and the Protective Function of Irony

In reading *The Singing Whakapapa*, even more than in reading *Symmes Hole*, it is tempting to confuse the central character with the author. Hugh's love

⁹ See Art Berman, *Preface to Modernism*.

of Shakespeare and Wagner, the fact that his name is drawn from European high culture and his emphasis on a European genetic inheritance – manifesting as a love of singing – all serve as illustrations of Stead's tastes. They are part of the novel's politics. In a rather self-conscious way, Stead uses such details to highlight his view that European culture retains its relevance in the New Zealand context: "The time has come to stop apologising for our European culture, as if it was something that compromised a true local identity" ("Fear of Flying" 131). Stead is critical of Wedde's *Penguin* because its emphasis on location threatens to undermine the influence of a European heritage:

[S]omewhere at the back of my mind there is a thought for that British and European culture which is my particular inheritance and which has become also a part of the inheritance of most who are of Maori blood. The idea that our hold on it is secure, or that we go on possessing it without effort and vigilance, seems to me false and dangerous. It is also falsely romantic to think that geography takes absolute precedence over history in determining where the allegiances lie. (*Answering* 144)

Stead is also critical of Wedde's emphasis, in the *Penguin*, on Maori writing. Revisionist approaches such as these undermine his notion of literary excellence: "Our literary community ... is becoming the handmaiden of political and sociological myth-making. Moralism rules. Good writing – the notion of accurate observation, truth to experience and to the facts, the right words in the right order – is relatively unimportant" (Stead, *Answering* 277). This is echoed in Hugh's tirade against revisionist approaches to history in *The Singing Whakapapa* (142-43). In each case, the real issue is one of cultural authority. Stead believes that other people write "bullying book[s]" (*Answering* 287) and that feminism is a "moral crusade" (278) because they do not coincide with his own views of the past. Wanting to retain a Pakeha possession of history, he finds the revisionism of

Ihimaera's *The Matriarch* "intellectually puerile and imaginatively destitute" (*Answering* 194) and ends his review of the novel with an assertion that "[e]veryone would be better served by a more truthful image" (195).

Stead and Hugh, both reliant on a "common sense" approach to history, are keen to separate history and "morality". Furthermore, if the "moralism" of the present is not to be imposed on the past then, equally, colonial injustices need not impact on the present. To make such an imposition constitutes, in Stead's terms, "picking over old wounds" (*Answering* 195). In his review of *The Matriarch*, he argues that "[t]he past doesn't have to be forgotten; but its rights and wrongs belong to those who lived them, not to us" (*Answering* 195). Similarly, for Hugh – who we remember was born "all pale, male and unsuspecting" (*Singing Whakapapa* 143) – one's cultural authority need not be examined in terms of past injustices. It was not Hugh who "determined that he and his blood should be born, and live, and feel that they belonged and must be buried, under southern stars" (149). Given these similarities and the fact that Hugh and Stead both seem oblivious to the ideologies operating within their own conceptions of history, it is easy to confuse the two. Stuart Murray, it seems, has also noticed the parallels between Hugh and Stead. With reference to *The Singing Whakapapa* he writes: "Stead still carries some wounds from the arguments of the eighties, wounds that surface in the novel to disrupt the narrative with touches of self-indulgence" (127).

While Stead complains that revisionist histories impose present day politics on the past, it is difficult to separate the treatment of history in *The Singing Whakapapa* from his own political agendas. There is a correlation, for example, between the politics at work in *The Singing Whakapapa*, and those in *Voices*, a book of poetry commissioned by the New Zealand government for the sesquicentenary. In one poem, "The Missionary", Stead anticipates his description of Flatt's first encounter with Maori in *The Singing Whakapapa*. He

describes, through the eyes of a missionary, a Maori chief in a canoe. While in the novel Stead merely suggests that the chief is about to be overtaken by the future, he is more specific in the poem: "splendid in feathers, kai tangata, eater of men – / he paddles out of silence, and into the past" (10). European culture will fill the void left by Maori: "Europe is in our books / and in our boxes. We will unpack them slowly" (10). It is difficult to separate such lines from some of Stead's more controversial criticism. In *Answering to the Language*, for example, Stead considers the effects of cultural mixing on Pakeha literature: "Of course Maori elements have entered and will enter Pakeha writing. But the Pakeha element is not one half of a dual culture. It is a single culture absorbing relatively small amounts from the other" (284). Maori culture, a "single culture which has absorbed very large European elements" (284), has not fared so well. Drawing on the sort of binary oppositions that Lamb refers to in "Problems of Originality", Stead judges Maori culture against a standard of traditional authenticity. In response to Keri Hulme winning the 1984 Pegasus award for *the bone people* he argues, for instance, that "a novel by a Pakeha ... has won an award intended for a Maori" (*Answering* 180). Hulme, he contends, does not have sufficient Maori blood to be Maori. He notes that she was not brought up speaking the language and adds that, in the novel, "[h]er uses of Maori language and mythology strike me as willed, self-conscious, not inevitable, not entirely authentic" (180). Stead refuses to allow for change in what it means to be Maori. If, through the incorporation of European culture, Maori culture has lost "authenticity", then this means that it loses any claim to recognition.

Another set of politics is at work in Stead's sentimental approach to Flatt's relationship with Tarore in *The Singing Whakapapa*. In the company of Hugh's grandmother, Flatt makes a pilgrimage to Tarore's grave: "her grandfather had thanked her for coming with him and had told her that for many years he had wanted to revisit that place. He would, he told her, rest easier in his own grave for having looked on it one last time" (283). Stead, if not condoning the

relationship, stubbornly refuses to disapprove. This is dependent on the reader never gaining access to Tarore's point-of-view; something that allows Stead to gloss over the difficulties that emerge within Hugh's narrative of anti-conquest. Furthermore, Stead's treatment of the relationship between Flatt and Tarore is mirrored in his approach to that of Hugh and Lydia. Both relationships, in being treated sympathetically, can be read as a reaction against so-called "political correctness". The target in this instance is feminism¹⁰ but it extends, through the involvement of Tarore, into colonial politics. The coloniser's sexual possession of the native is not to be condemned.

Stead's treatment of the Treaty of Waitangi in the novel seems also to be politically motivated. As discussed earlier, Stead presents the signing of the Treaty as a farce. Certainly the circumstances of its signing, as portrayed in the novel, are at odds with the importance now accorded it. However, Stead devotes approximately eight pages to the signing and the debates surrounding it. His emphasis on disorganisation, when looked at in conjunction with his criticism, is clearly intended to undermine the Treaty's current status. Stead outlines his opinion of the Treaty in *Answering to the Language*:

The problem with the Treaty of Waitangi is that it was a pact between Maori tribes and the British Crown of 1840. It took no account of New Zealanders who were neither English nor Maori, because at that time there were none. Pakeha New Zealanders – the 'native born' as Keith Sinclair calls us in his book on New Zealand national identity – were not a party to the treaty, and I think for that reason do not feel responsible for it or in sympathy with its present-day consequences. (285)

¹⁰ A similar agenda can be identified in *The Death of the Body*, another of Stead's novels that deals with the sexual relationship between a professor and one of his students. In this instance, the "targets" are featured within the novel: lesbian feminists with short spiky hair and overalls.

For Stead, the Treaty belongs to the past. It is an inflexible document which quickly loses relevance and relieves later generations of their obligations. If, as Stead suggests, the meaning of the Treaty is fixed at the moment of signing, the disorganisation that he describes in the novel constitutes a real blow to its credibility. The uncertainty apparent in the negotiations beforehand have a similar effect. Hugh is particularly interested in this part of Heke's speech as it is recorded by Colenso: "[I]t is not for us but for you, our fathers – you missionaries – it is for you to say, to decide what it shall be. It is for you to choose, for we are only natives ... Children, yes, children solely. We do not know. Do you then choose for us'" (221). In light of conflicting accounts of Heke's stance towards the Treaty, Hugh concludes that the warrior is speaking ironically. As such, irony ensures that a founding moment in New Zealand's history becomes uncertain. Hugh is, in fact, grappling with something that occurs, on a different level, within the novel as a whole.

Stead's use of irony in *The Singing Whakapapa* leaves the reader uncertain. An inability to determine the distance between author and central character – which is also another way of looking at the difficulties in *Symmes Hole* – means that the novel remains unclear. To an extent that is difficult to determine, Hugh is ironised. In spite of expressing ideas that could easily be drawn from Stead's criticism, Hugh's approach to history is undermined within the novel. His understanding of European culture as a progressive influence – something apparent in his emphasis on the landscape as a garden emerging from disorder – is dependent on a refusal to acknowledge the world around him. In juxtaposing the results of Hugh's research with his wife's "forensics", Stead emphasises the point. Hat's photographs of stabbed and strangled naked women – evidence of present-day barbarity – elicit little response from Hugh who prefers to discuss intertribal wars of the previous century (67-72). The way that Stead structures the novel highlights other difficulties. Parallels drawn between Hugh and Flatt – in particular their affairs with younger women – make a nonsense of

Hugh's insistence on a separation of history and morality. Similarly, Hugh's inability to recognise that Jean-Anne is his daughter makes him appear wilful and blind. His denial of having seen the film *Voyager* is particularly damning in this respect. Like Faber, the central character in the film, Hugh is so assured of his world-view that he is blind to the moral consequences of his actions; in fact, his incestuous attraction to Jean-Anne places him in danger of repeating Faber's tragic mistakes. Add to this the importance that Hugh places on the Eden myth – which emphasises the moral implications of the past for the present – and Hugh's ideas are undermined further. To put it another way, Stead ensures that Hugh's rhetoric constantly betrays itself. As is the case with Wedde's novel, it is difficult to account for Stead's treatment of Hugh. Mark Williams, in his review of *The Singing Whakapapa*, suggests that Stead is merely playing games with the reader: "He provides us with obvious signposts so that we have something to which to attach our preconceptions about 'The C. K. Stead view of nation, culture, race and history', then he switches lanes, takes the back road, confronts his Steadian persona with discoveries that change his sense of both present and past" (305). However, the fact that Stead has always been so forthright in his opinions – in spite of the fact that many of them are highly controversial and have earned him a difficult reputation¹¹ – suggests that it may be more complex than this.

The situation is complicated by the fact that the novel draws on Stead's own family history. Hugh's understanding of his past mirrors Stead's as it is expressed here: "There were, it now seems when I reflect on it, three 'realities': that of New Zealand which was all about me; that of England, the arbiter, source of power, language and culture; and that of Oceania, the region of romance" (Introduction to *Faber Book*, xii). And yet the novel draws on a mythologised and inaccurate version of Stead's family history. In his review of Ihimaera's *The*

¹¹ See Stephen Stratford's, "Blaspheming Against the Pieties: Why the Literati Hate C. K. Stead."

Matriarch in *Answering to the Language*, Stead refers to a story told to him more than once by his grandmother: “my great-great-grandfather, John Flatt, a lay catechist, had fallen out with the Church Missionary Society by suggesting that its missionaries in New Zealand were acquiring too much Maori land” (189). However, Stead’s point, in recounting this, is to demonstrate that “family mythology likes heroes and prefers them simple” (189). Stead’s research into Select Committee records in England shows that his grandmother was wrong, that his great-great-grandfather in fact *defended* the acquisition of Maori land by missionaries. And yet in the novel, after Hugh’s grandmother tells her grandson the same story about John Flatt told to Stead (79), records examined by Hugh in England confirm her story. In fact, Flatt’s conflict with the missionaries over their acquisition of land is a key element of the novel. Stead, it seems, is making concessions to a late twentieth century readership who may otherwise be unsympathetic to Flatt. However, as a result his novel is caught somewhere between autobiography and self-confessed lie. Certainly, as a text about Pakeha origins it rests uneasily with Stead’s assertion, in regard to Ihimaera’s *The Matriarch*, that a novel should be attuned to the truth (*Answering* 195).

Irony, although causing difficulty, can also function as a protective device. It is possible that by ironising his own position, Stead hopes to protect it from criticism. A difficulty in assessing the distance between author and central character allows Stead to disassociate himself from Hugh if necessary. Gestures towards postmodernism work in a similar way. Stead ensures that Hugh knows, for instance, that it is not possible to make sense of the past, that it is all more random than any historical narrative may suggest: “Hugh Grady, sixty years old, pulls at the threads of family history that cross and recross a centre which is the Auckland isthmus, hoping for pattern, colour, harmony, a warp and weft, but recognising that in the end there may be only a great granny knot of time and circumstance” (252). And yet in spite of this – and the fact that Hugh often comes across as reactionary and blind, even unsympathetic – the novel validates

his approach to history. Stead ensures that, by the end of the novel, Hugh's history leads to resolution. This history, placed in opposition to revisionist history and justified by "facts" and "experience", works. Mysteries of past and present are resolved. There is no fall from grace for Hugh; no real condemnation of his position. The novel, more so than Wedde's, sets out to be persuasive. It has all the hallmarks of Belsey's description of Colin MacCabe's classic realism:

"Classic realism is characterized by *illusionism*, narrative which leads to *closure*, and a *hierarchy of discourses* which establishes the 'truth' of the story" (70). In order to do this, it silences a character such as Tarore whose difference threatens to expose the assumptions on which the narrative is based. It works hard to cover its tracks. As Belsey puts it, "[i]deology, masquerading as coherence and plenitude, is in reality inconsistent, limited, contradictory, and the realist text as a crystallization of ideology, participates in this incompleteness even while it diverts attention from the fact" (104). Irony, by masking difficulty within a text, can be part of this process. It hides the ambivalence that is inherent in late twentieth century attempts to protect Pakeha cultural authority from revisionist history. Irony allows Stead and the "forgetful" Pakeha reader to have it both ways; to recognise the complexity and ambivalence of the past but still invest in a "common sense" approach to history. The latter allows Stead an emphasis on a European cultural heritage and confers authority in these terms.

Shadbolt's Uncertain Ownership of History

In Shadbolt's novels irony is, again, used to deflect criticism. In *Season of the Jew* Shadbolt ensures that Fairweather ironises his own position as a colonial painter. Thus he says to Biggs: "Natives of these islands can still be deemed useful for pictorial purpose. In a year or two, when they stand even less in our way, I might find a market for decorative Maoris. It is as well to anticipate colonial sentiment" (46). He also mocks his own preference for order and symmetry. Irony, tinged with humour, ensures that his practices appear

transparent. It also means that Fairweather is distanced from other colonial painters whose ideologies and practices may be unappealing to the late twentieth century reader. In this way Shadbolt, like Stead, comes close to undermining his central character. This is most apparent when Fairweather attempts to sketch the waterfall. After establishing Fairweather as the anti-conquerer, Shadbolt suddenly deflates his position: "Then bravado undid him. Craning forward to consider a diverting stutter in the cataract, he had a difference of opinion with his left leg and lost equilibrium. He slid, clutching air, and toppled. He bounced once, twice, and lay stunned" (68). The power dynamic of the whole episode is reversed: "He was cast. All evil comedy; the artist in thrall to his theme" (68). As such, Shadbolt anticipates the criticism that may follow such obvious use of anti-conquest. He is careful to ensure, however, that such irony does not undermine the fictional history that he constructs. In the end, the novel validates the position of its central character. Fairweather remains the hero of a colonial narrative designed to restore a forgotten history to Pakeha. Shadbolt's use of irony and humour mean that Fairweather remains a likeable character, distanced from the ideologies that establish his position. The fact that humour can also deflect difficulty is apparent, here, when Shadbolt responds to W H Oliver's criticism of *Monday's Warriors*: "When was a comic novel obliged to play fair?" ("Homer" 56).

While it would be difficult to describe *Season of the Jew* as a comic novel, Shadbolt's ironic treatment of Fairweather adds a lighter touch. However, there is one instance when Shadbolt directs real criticism at his central character. It comes in the form of a comment made by William Fox: "How fortunate we are as painters, Fairweather. We have only the one viewpoint. Our own. And if we are persuasive with the brush, we make others share it" (367). For the late twentieth century reader, such a comment highlights the ideological difficulties of Fairweather's position as a colonial painter. It exposes the artist's reliance on a singular view of the landscape, something that establishes, within the anti-

conquest, the viewer's dominance. Fox is also speaking metaphorically, explaining to Fairweather why, as a politician, any decision he makes in regard to the fate of Hamiora is complex. However, as Calder argues in his review of the novel in *Landfall*, Fox's comment has implications for the novel as a whole. In allowing Fox such a remark, Shadbolt draws attention to his own method, to the fact that the persuasiveness of his novel is dependent on the limited point-of-view of his central character. Not only does it "caution the reader against the spell of persuasion" (Calder 107) and "undermine our confidence in the novel's ability to tell the truth" (Calder 107) but it suggests, in a way that recalls the narrator's inconsistent treatment of Te Kooti in the "Fact and Further" section, a hint of discomfort with Fairweather's point-of-view. This is hardly surprising given that it combines a late twentieth century liberal perspective – necessary to retain a contemporary readership – with that of a nineteenth century colonial painter and soldier. While the latter perspective allows Shadbolt to justify a disregard for cultural difference, Fox's comment, which draws parallels between his own approach and Fairweather's, is far from complimentary. It brings Fairweather back from the margins and places him squarely within the context of official history.

The House of Strife reveals further uncertainties. Shadbolt's treatment of Wildblood's visitor from New Zealand is particularly problematic. It seems, at first, that the visitor's nationalist views reflect those of Shadbolt who, in his memoir, stresses the importance of celebrating New Zealand's own unique history. Shadbolt emphasises, for instance, his impatience with an education system focused on Britain: "We belonged to the British Empire. We belonged to Britain. We saluted an alien king or his costumed representatives. Buttressing our education was the belief that there was little of our land worth knowing: no history, no literature, no art, no culture" (*From the Edge* 31). Wildblood's visitor is also keen for New Zealand to claim its own history: "I fear we own too little of our story, and even that is likely to be lost. Friends tell me I am a romantic. I am

willing to allow that I may be a decade or two premature" (212). However, he is presented as a somewhat naive character, yet to understand what even Wildblood knows by the end of his memoir; history is relative. It is not about the truth, but about who has the power to determine how things are remembered. Wildblood, therefore, dismisses his visitor's attempts to determine the truth about Heke's role in the war: "I may be saying that it doesn't matter where John Heke was, or was not; what he did, or did not" (214). Such ideas challenge the classic realist assumptions on which a novel such as *Season of the Jew* depends. The sort of persuasiveness that it gains from being meticulously researched is undermined. Furthermore, as a novel about the ownership of narrative, the reliability of memory and the nature of history, *The House of Strife* calls into question Shadbolt's self-appointed role as the writer of New Zealand's "heroic fictions". The fact that Wildblood's stories, even his memoir, are stolen impacts on how the reader is to view Shadbolt's treatment of Te Kooti in *Season of the Jew* and Titokowaru in *Monday's Warriors*. By incorporating them into his histories – by making them explicable as characters within epic – Shadbolt takes possession of their stories in much the same way as Wildblood attempts with Heke. Looked at in this way, *The House of Strife* unsettles the first two novels of the trilogy. It is as if Shadbolt is mocking his own approach, using irony to step back even further from the ideologies operating within his own work. When, for instance, Wildblood writes of Angela as a "dusky companion" (43), his "Dark Lady" (80) or his "brown beloved" (124), it is as if Shadbolt is ironising his own treatment of Maori women in the earlier novels. He must be aware that any late twentieth century reader will recognise in such terms the colonial cliché, if not the language of anti-conquest.

The House of Strife, in addressing how Wildblood reconciles his preconceptions of New Zealand with its reality, touches on what Bhabha sees as a key aspect of the colonial process; the coloniser's assumption of universalist authority in the face of difference. According to Bhabha such an assumption,

unsettled by colonial realities, leads to the adoption of a dual perspective. He describes this as the “*splitting* of colonial discourse so that two attitudes towards external reality persist; one takes reality into consideration while the other disavows it and replaces it by a product of desire” (91). Looked at in these terms, the splitting of the Wildblood/Youngman character represents an uncertain response to difference. Wildblood struggles constantly with his alter-ego for control of how the new environment is to be negotiated. The split is understood as literary in origin, a battle between Wildblood’s more poetic aesthetic and Youngman’s preference for epic. In this way Shadbolt rewrites an inherited ambivalence in different, more acceptable, terms. The split is also, by the end of the novel, resolved. Although Wildblood thinks himself more engaged with reality than his alter-ego he, quite unwittingly, finds himself playing out a central role in one of Youngman’s narratives of wartime heroics and romance. Ultimately New Zealand becomes the setting for his own story.

What complicates this matter and, incidentally, suggests another source of ambivalence is that Shadbolt, in writing about a character negotiating New Zealand realities, appears to be drawing on his own experience. *From the Edge of the Sky* is concerned, primarily, with his attempts to come to terms with New Zealand after having written about it in England during the 1950s: “I wanted New Zealand’s warm and wild north, the sweep of Ninety Mile Beach, the serpentine estuaries of the Hokianga, the mangrove-girt tides. In other words the New Zealand that haunted me as an expatriate; the country I invented and revised in story after story, in a dim London basement” (*From the Edge* 73). Shadbolt’s solution, once back in New Zealand, is not to write himself into epic romance as Wildblood does, but to do the artistic equivalent. Looking at the view from Cape Reinga shortly after his return, he feels that he has already “painted [him]self into that picture, become part of the panorama. It was as if [he] had climbed into a mirror to look out on the world” (34). Although the “untranslated messages” (69) are still there, he finds himself “mired in the

picture” (69) looking out. The idea of a painting suggests that the view is an artistic construction rather than something that requires an engagement with reality. It represents a variation on the anti-conquest; one that places its emphasis less on ownership than on establishing belonging. Not surprisingly, then, it is New Zealand painters such as Colin McCahon and Eric Lee-Johnson who facilitate Shadbolt’s rediscovery of New Zealand: “Eric’s watercolours of the North Island interior – of decrepit farmhouses, patchy forest, shattered stumps, rock-strewn riversides, misty hills – remain as enthralling as ever. They did far more for me than the landscapes themselves” (*From the Edge* 121). The New Zealand environment, in order to be engaged with, must first be interpreted and constructed, within a painting, as landscape.

The difficulty of responding to the landscape is also a factor in *The Singing Whakapapa*. It lies behind Hugh’s insistence on understanding the land as a garden restored from wilderness. His approach to history is inseparable from this concept of progression away from disorder. Hugh is keen to argue his case, to justify at every opportunity his particular take on the past. And yet Hugh, like Wildblood, takes on a dual perspective. As a child he sees himself as two boys; the responsible Hugh and the impulsive Wolf. Remnants of such a split continue into adulthood. It is Wolf, for example, who has “radical thought[s]” (101), who opposes the Vietnam war and who initiates the affair with Lydia. However, when Jean-Anne reveals to Hugh that she is Lydia’s daughter, the Hugh/Wolf split becomes something quite different: “It’s as if he is two people, one of whom, the instinctive, the intuitive one, knows what she means – has no need to be told – while the other is all ignorance and puzzlement and curiosity” (229). That one side of him will acknowledge reality and the other will not recalls, again, Bhabha’s theory of a split colonial discourse. With Hugh, such a split undermines the basis of his history; a history that works so hard to separate itself from morality. If one side of him knows already that Jean-Anne is his daughter to Lydia and that, by implication, he is repeating the mistakes of Flatt, then the basis

of his history is undermined. The side of him that wants to ignore it is the one that clings to the ideologies, that refuses to engage honestly with a colonial past. Hugh's approach to history, then, is dependent on a suppression of certain knowledges, something that reflects badly on any attempt to separate the moral difficulties of the past from the present.

The sort of uncertainty in regard to narrative point-of-view that a split consciousness implies combines with the use of irony to destabilise these narratives and the debates of which they are part. If Shadbolt's New Zealand Wars trilogy attempts to provide Pakeha with a secure or consistent point-of-view from which to approach a colonial past, *The House of Strife* constitutes a serious difficulty. Furthermore, Shadbolt's treatment of Wildblood exposes the ambivalences that lie behind any attempt to take possession of history. Similarly, Stead's uncertain treatment of Hugh in *The Singing Whakapapa* unsettles the history that constitutes the narrative. His use of irony can be read as an attempt to protect his novel, and the politics behind it, from criticism. It also obscures the ambivalences that are inherent in his approach to history; the need, for instance, to assign Maori history and culture to the past in order to remove the threat of difference and to ensure that European culture can be understood as a progressive influence. What this suggests is that the ambivalences Bhabha identifies at the colonial moment – in particular, those arising out of a disavowal of difference – reappear within contemporary constructions of history. Tarore, in retaining her place within Maori history and in exposing the hypocrisies of the colonial project is central to this. As *Symmes Hole* suggests, contradictory demands arising from the present-day context – the need, for instance, to attain innocence from a history that acknowledges wrongs – add to the difficulties and unsettle any attempt to provide Pakeha with a secure sense of belonging in this country.

Conclusion

I was reading things in the paper and seeing Pakeha definitions and misconceptions of social reality. And I was saying my god, these people don't know there is another world over there, right beside them. They don't know anything about it. (Walker 21)

In the quotation above, Ranginui Walker explains why, in 1973, he began writing the “Korero” column in the *Listener*. Walker’s aim, on taking over the column, was to “portray a Maori perception of reality to the Pakeha” (12) and to counter an emphasis on Maori failure within the media. Such Pakeha complacency was shaken, however, when increased Maori protest during the late 1970s and 1980s – over land in particular – made Maori anger more difficult to ignore. Within the literary field, a novel such as Witi Ihimaera’s *The Matriarch*, first published in 1986, reflected a new political consciousness among Maori. Ihimaera pitched the novel against Pakeha constructions of history; he lifted whole passages from an entry by Keith Sorrenson in *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* and interspersed them with angry comments that undermined the Pakeha representation¹². His stance was openly accusatory – “For most assuredly *you*, Pakeha, began taking the land from us as you were signing your worthless Treaty. *You*, Pakeha, began taking away our culture” (*Matriarch* 73-74) – a far cry from his writing during the early 1970s about Maori rural life. The changing cultural climate also impacted on Pakeha writing, although in a very different way. A new awareness of the difficulties of cross-cultural representation revealed the shortcomings inherent in previous portrayals of Maori by Pakeha writers. As Fergus Barrowman puts it, “Maori have usually existed in Pakeha fiction as colourful Other” (xix). The realisation that Pakeha writers of the past had rarely moved beyond stereotypical portrayals of Maori led, according to

¹² This is discussed by Mark Williams in his chapter on Ihimaera in *Leaving the Highway*, p 110-38.

Barrowman, to a reluctance to write about Maori at all: “one of the notable features of Pakeha fiction of the last fifteen years has been the low incidence of Maori characters and issues” (xix). The area was seen as a minefield. What is surprising is that the level of cultural awareness that this suggests did not translate into a desire to re-examine, within fiction, issues of Pakeha identity.

The reluctance of Pakeha writers to deal with issues of colonial history and identity recalls Turner’s theory that Pakeha culture is constructed “ahistorically”. The trauma of settlement is “forgotten” as Pakeha focus on the present (“Settlement” 21). Not surprisingly, then, Pakeha writing, according to Barrowman, is focused within a personal – rather than historical – context. He has this to say in relation to a short story by Vincent O’Sullivan: “When culture is so thin that it comes down to personal life, then yes, of course every life is unique, but also scarcely distinguishable from another. It is only the passing place names which tell us this story is set in New Zealand – this cultured, artistic middle class is responding to history by not thinking about it” (xviii). However, this is not just an issue of history. Contemporary Pakeha writers, in comparison with Maori, are less inclined to tackle issues of identity, especially issues that require a negotiation of the relationship with Maori. It seems that most majority cultures operate in a similar way: “within White-dominated societies, and among White people, Whiteness remains a relatively underdiscussed and underresearched ‘racial’ identity” (Bonnett 173). Whiteness is something that White people take for granted. In New Zealand, this manifests in a Pakeha sense of being without culture. On the international stage – Millennium celebrations or visits from overseas dignitaries – there is a reliance on visible aspects of Maori culture to assert a “New Zealand” identity¹³. The difficulty lies, in part, with a conception of culture that focuses on the tangible; that is, the visual arts, music, cooking or dancing. The deeper aspects of culture – conceptions of justice,

¹³ I am thinking, too, of the number of Pakeha who find themselves performing an improvised haka or singing “Po Karekare ana” to acquaintances overseas.

beauty, time and “self”; attitudes towards death, leadership, modesty and work; rules of social interaction and approaches to problem-solving – can, within the majority culture, become “invisible”. Thinking oneself “cultureless”, then, is yet another form of complacency. It reveals an assumption, on the part of some Pakeha, that all people think in a similar way. It ignores both cultural difference and the impact that Pakeha culture has on others. Once again, a reliance on the sort of universalist assumptions that Bhabha identifies within the coloniser’s discourse at the colonial moment, reappears in a different form today.

A feeling of being “cultureless” is combined, among some Pakeha, with a determination to ignore history. This became very apparent when the use of the term “post-colonial traumatic stress disorder” in a speech by Tariana Turia, Associate Maori Affairs Minister, to the New Zealand Psychological Society Conference in August 2000 was widely reported. It brought the issue of colonial history to the fore and, more importantly, implied that a colonial past continued to have a psychological impact on Maori. Turia’s use of the term initiated a flurry of letters to the *The Press* and to the *Listener*. While some were supportive of her stance, a good many were not. A number of the coping strategies identified by Turner – and found to varying degrees in the novels I have been looking at – emerge within the letters. Among the rhetoric, a denial of cultural difference can be located: “For goodness sake let us recognise the damage and the benefits to the Maori race through colonisation. We have a great country and should be proud to say we are New Zealanders, no matter whether we are of pakeha, Maori, Dutch, Asian, etc, descent” (Yelverton 10). Another more common strategy was to deny the impact of history on the present: “Mrs Turia should put the past behind her, as everyone else is trying to do, and let us all live in harmony” (Bryant 4); “‘We’ are not the colonisers. And that is the whole point. History is by definition the past, and the Maoris must deal with the present and move on” (Freeman 4). Implicit in such responses is the notion that colonialism can be separated from the sort of society we have today. Such notions reflect, once

again, a blindness to the operation of the majority culture and represent a denial that others, with different ancestry, may feel marginalised. Furthermore such responses, aired in the context of Turia's comments, highlight the fact that a will to live "ahistorically" is of considerable value if the past is difficult to deal with.

The novels I have been looking at by Stead, Wedde and Shadbolt do at least acknowledge the value, even the necessity, of history. However, the strategies that each writer employs to "tame" that history cannot be extricated from the context in which the novels are written. *Symmes Hole* and *Season of the Jew*, both published during the 1980s, appeared at a time of significant cultural readjustment. The proposition investigated in Wedde's novel – that Pakeha can gain a sense of belonging by rewriting their past as a "natural" colonisation – now seems naive. It makes sense only within a 1980s context which saw, among a section of Pakeha society, a desire to reinvent their culture in accordance with a romanticised interpretation of things Maori. *Season of the Jew*, which deals with the difficulty of Pakeha guilt in a very different way, by constructing a heroic history for Pakeha through the eyes of a nineteenth century character with late twentieth century sensibilities, is also inseparable from its context. Its reliance on a predominantly realist historical approach now seems dated. A changing critical climate, then, influences our response to history, something seen in a comparison between *Season of the Jew* and *The House of Strife*. The latter, published only seven years after the former, betrays – in its emphasis on metafiction – the influence of postmodern theory. As a result of being so closely integrated with their contexts, ambivalences within the novels I have been looking at may only reveal themselves in retrospect. The same applies to my own approach which is indebted to current critical practices. I am unable to extricate myself from current approaches to history and theory which, no doubt, carry their own ambivalences.

I am conscious that my approach to *Symmes Hole* and *The Singing*

Whakapapa in the first chapter appears to leave Pakeha in a “no win” situation. Hugh’s reliance on a European cultural heritage sees him attempting to rewrite colonial history as a story of progression away from disorder and towards “civilisation”. The indigenous culture is steadily overtaken and Hugh’s cultural authority, derived from Europe, is confirmed within the present. However, to take the opposite approach – as the researcher does in *Symmes Hole* – and place all emphasis on a Pacific location is equally problematic. Heberley, washed clean of his European past, crosses the divide between two essentialist constructions of culture and offers, to the researcher, an appropriated indigeneity. The difficulty with each of these approaches is not that they are wholly “wrong”, but that they participate in the sort of binary thinking that Lamb identifies in “Problems of Originality” (1986). They begin with an assumption that authenticity is available from the past: an authenticity that will allow Pakeha a stable identity in the present.

The difficulties inherent in such an approach are hard to ignore and Wedde seems willing to acknowledge that attempts to gain authenticity from the past are impossible to sustain. Alongside Heberley’s assimilation into Maori society there are instances of cross-cultural misunderstanding and negotiation. To the extent that the novel acknowledges this type of exchange, it can be aligned with current approaches to colonial history. These emphasise not the meeting of two monolithic cultures, but the interactions that occur between them. What is at stake here is a shared history, rather than an obliteration or appropriation of indigenous innocence. Older notions of “fatal-impact” deny the possibility of an equal history, ignore the ability of indigenous cultures to adapt and, in the process, relegate them to the past: “Even as it valorizes the so-called authentic voice of a local culture, the fatal-impact narrative deploys a *taste* for the primitive in order to place the voice out of hearing – and therefore to call its silence ‘prehistoric’ as well as tragic – as effectively as the most assiduous missionary”

(Calder et al 4).¹⁴ The sort of guilt that arises out of a reliance on the “authenticity” of origins has a similar effect. The “innocence” of the indigenous culture is the very thing that ensures its demise and, thereby, confirms the unquestioned dominance of the colonising culture.

Trevor Bentley, in his book *Pakeha Maori: The Extraordinary Story of the Europeans Who Lived as Maori in Early New Zealand*, adopts a historical approach that emphasises cultural exchange within the contact zone. According to Bentley, Pakeha Maori – predominantly seamen and convicts – played an important role in early colonial society as guides, ships’ pilots, interpreters and mediators (10). As such, they were “able to bridge the gap between the cultures” (219). Today, according to Bentley, they “continue to intrude on our consciousness to remind us of our inter-cultural past” (11). Bentley’s approach is, in this sense, refreshing. It assumes, for instance, that Maori society is flexible and dynamic, certainly capable of assimilating new ideas and technologies. However, there are risks involved in such an approach. The uncertainties of cultural interaction can harden into a new form of identity. Bentley concludes his introductory chapter – entitled “A Third Kind of New Zealander” – by suggesting that these men and women could provide a common point of origin for both Maori and Pakeha: “The Pakeha Maori were important in shaping early race relations in New Zealand and many thousands of New Zealanders, both Maori and Pakeha living today, are the descendants of these adventurous men and women” (11). There is a suggestion here that an emphasis on cultural interaction can be used to resolve the differences between cultures, to facilitate the formation of a third culture. However as Bhabha sees it, such interactions are important in themselves. His interest is in the “in-between” spaces or in “those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural difference” (Bhabha 1). The hybrid identity is formed in this space of negotiation and contestation, beyond the boundaries, and is, therefore, never stable.

¹⁴ See Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*.

If cultural interaction is complicated at the colonial moment, it is even more so today. The colonising culture, now the majority culture, functions very differently from how it did in the past. Furthermore, it responds to a set of changing political and social imperatives specific to the current environment. As a result, the incorporation of things Maori into Pakeha culture – something Bhabha may understand as hybridity if occurring at the colonial moment – is not necessarily a sign of uncertainty. It is more likely that such borrowings reflect an increased awareness of the value of the indigenous culture and a genuine attempt, on the part of some Pakeha, to recognise the continued significance of things Maori. It is only when terms taken from the indigenous culture are used in the service of attempts to establish Pakeha belonging that things become more difficult. I have already mentioned, for instance, Hugh's idea of a "singing whakapapa" (185), Shadbolt's claim that he is writing "the tales of [his] tribe" (*From the Edge* 177) and King's assertion that "Pakeha have no other turangawaewae" (*Being Pakeha Now* 11). While all are indicative of ongoing cultural interaction, they should not be confused with, or justified as, cultural hybridity; not, at least, in the way that Bhabha uses the term. His emphasis is always on the undermining – never the consolidation – of colonial authority. Hybridity is not about the appropriation of indigenous terms or knowledges to bolster one's own authority. Which is not to say that any attempt to do so is free of uncertainty. The appropriation of indigenous terms sees Maori culture credited with an authority that is perceived to be lacking within Pakeha culture. Like other attempts to confirm Pakeha authority within the present – whether that be via the use of anti-conquest, the distancing of oneself from colonial practices or attempts to ignore cultural difference – the adoption of Maori terms hides an underlying insecurity.

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